B945
.B44M8

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
12-28-1945
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
B945
.B44M8

The Philosophy of

EDWARD BELLAMY

REVIEW COPY
JUN 1 [illegible] 1945 $1 60
Columbia University Press

LIBRARY
DEC 28 1945
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Philosophy of EDWARD BELLAMY

By ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Author of
Edward Bellamy, A Biography

New York : Morningside Heights
KING'S CROWN PRESS
1945

COPYRIGHT 1945 BY

ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Printed in the United States of America

King's Crown Press is a division of Columbia University Press organized for the purpose of making certain scholarly material available at minimum cost. Toward that end, the publishers have adopted every reasonable economy except such as would interfere with a legible format. The work is presented substantially as submitted by the author, without the usual editorial attention of Columbia University Press.

2372

THIS IS A WARTIME BOOK

PREFACE

HERETOFORE Edward Bellamy has been thought of chiefly as the author of the world's most widely read utopia, and as leader of a social movement which did much to define the program of liberal political action in America for half a century. More than any other single man he was responsible for maintaining the genius of America in the face of European political dogma.

The author began a biography of Bellamy with this point of view, and planned to include only a brief presentation of his general life philosophy. However, examination of his unpublished writings disclosed one of those rare original minds which have the skill and power to get outside the framework of our thinking and to view man and his setting as would a fresh mind from another sphere.

This rare power was not just a happy natural faculty. Bellamy had clearly apprehended the significance of such an approach to human problems. In his early twenties he wrote:

> We should seek to reverse the accustomed order and make the objective subjective and the subjective objective. That is, we should seek to view ourselves as from without instead of viewing all things as from ourselves as from within. Seek a home, a center, a more intimate ego in the universe of things without. Cultivate a habit of regarding the experiences of the individual from that standpoint. . . .
>
> So long as men persisted in regarding the universe as circling around the earth astronomy was a sad jumble. It was only when the terrestrial astronomer interpreted the universe from an universal standpoint, regarding the earth objectively, that the science was possible. It is so in the mental world. A corresponding discovery to that of Copernicus is necessary in philosophy.
>
> Perhaps these are only words such as another might say. The only difference is the earnestness with which I mean them and the reality for which they stand in my mind.[1]

[1] Unpublished papers of Edward Bellamy (B1–2–20, 21).

Through a period of fifteen years or more he deliberately and persistently disciplined himself in the development of this ability, and to no small degree he created a new and significant technique. The greater part of his earlier published work consists of essays into that method. As perhaps no other American writer has done, he found constantly new vantage points from which to get an objective view of man and his affairs.

In the midst of that process of developing his unusual power of objectivity his program was suddenly changed by the reception given to *Looking Backward*. He believed that the startling success of that book placed upon him the duty of promoting a program of social reform. He wrote to William Dean Howells in 1893: "The responsibility upon us who have won the ear of the public, to plead the cause of the voiceless masses, is beyond limit . . . the better a man does the better he has got to do. There is no discharge in that war." Also as the years passed he considered it necessary to elaborate further the ideas he had presented in *Looking Backward*. This he did in his book *Equality*.

Edward Bellamy's years of social and political activity were detours from the natural course of his life. His social and political obligations fulfilled, as he hoped, with the writing of *Equality*, he had dreams of returning to his earlier interests. He talked of further defining his philosophical views and presenting them in orderly form. He foresaw this as promising to be the greatest work of his life. However, the illness which bore him down for a decade, and ended his life at the age of forty-nine, terminated those hopes.

As the writing of his biography progressed it became evident to the author that the appearance of such a mind is an unusual occurrence. The quality of his thinking was so suggestive and illuminating that it was deemed wise to assemble the more important of his philosophical writings and to publish them in a separate volume.

Most of the material here presented is from Edward Bellamy's unpublished writings. Where previously published material is reproduced it has been taken from contexts which did not disclose its full import, and has been put into a setting which reveals its significance as part of a unified philosophy. The author believes that in making this material available to the public he is performing a service of no mean consequence.

The biography of Edward Bellamy has been published by the Columbia University Press. The source material used in preparing both this book and the biography has been placed in the Harvard College Library, with duplicates of a major part of it in the Library of Congress, the Huntington

Library in California, and the Antioch College Library in Ohio. A key to the location of source material quoted in both books is given in an appendix to the biography. Many quotations in the biography also throw light on Bellamy's philosophy.

ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Yellow Springs, Ohio
June, 1945

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

I. THE RELIGION OF SOLIDARITY 5

II. EDWARD BELLAMY AND INDIA 26

III. EDWARD BELLAMY AND NEMESIS 35

IV. THE ECONOMY OF HAPPINESS 69

V. THE RELIGION OF EDWARD BELLAMY . . 78

INTRODUCTION

To understand the quality and the significance of the social thinking of Edward Bellamy we must see it in the total setting of his mind. The various phases of his thought and the action were not unrelated expressions of fortuitous interests, but had a unity which resulted from an inclusive view of the world, and of his place and part in it. Though he was chiefly known, first as a writer of psychological studies in fiction form, and later as a social reformer, yet above all else he was a philosopher. With him a philosophy was not just a system of thought, but a working plan and program for his life.

His philosophy may be traced in his writings, especially in those private notebooks in which he set down his ideas without restraint or qualification. In general these were not for the purpose of informing or teaching others, but were memoranda made in the process of working out a way of life for himself. As a result, many philosophical observations are scattered promiscuously through his notebooks and manuscripts.

An examination of these fragments discloses that in several fields he developed and partly organized his ideas in accord with a general overall philosophy, with a resulting unity that, while informal and unforced, was integral with his life.

In one piece of writing, "The Religion of Solidarity," he did bring together a part of these fragments as a connected statement of his ideas about the relation of man and the infinite. Many intermediate steps are omitted, yet this is the best single expression we possess which gives his general concept of life, of mankind's relation to the whole, and of the nature of things.

Exploring in another field, in various fragments of writing which he never assembled or organized he developed and defined quite explicitly his ideas concerning the relations of man with himself through various stages of his life. These fragments, among the most important of his writing, include his thinking on the nature of personality and on the subject of nemesis.

This latter phase of his thinking and writing, we believe, justifies ranking Bellamy not below Freud. He is saner, better balanced and more

fundamental than Freud, more penetrating and more objective. Should the point of view he presented come to prevail generally, the resulting liberation from mental and spiritual servitude might dwarf to relative insignificance the relief resulting from physical emancipation of American slaves.

Yet another philosophical interest intrigued him through the years. Considering that a principal occupation of men is the pursuit of happiness, he reached the conclusion that for this pursuit to be most successful required enlightenment. The expression, "the economy of happiness," which recurs frequently in his notebooks, hints at his method of approach.

Then in *Looking Backward* and *Equality,* as well as in his notebooks, he presented an organized concept of the relations of men with each other which he believed would result in a good society. On other phases of philosophy, such as the nature of the biological and physical worlds, he left interesting observations, but apparently did not develop a clear framework of ideas.

To a person who believes that we reach fundamental conclusions by sheer logic, the ideas of Edward Bellamy would seem to be far from conclusive. However, logic is a weak and immature instrument, one of the latest and least perfected additions to human mental equipment. There is another process, far older, far better matured. A man may open his mind to every influence, to every kind of evidence, critically testing the evidence as best he can, trying to understand and to weigh each element for what it is worth. Then he can wait in open-minded relaxation and quietness, relying on the hidden processes of his mind to appraise, digest, and assimilate the merit of all these influences, and to emerge with a result or a conclusion in the form of intuition, which then can be tested, appraised, and refined by the same process. This was substantially the method of Edward Bellamy.

Man is not free to think as he will about life. He is under inexorable servitude to find that life is good. If an individual finds otherwise he loses incentive for living, tends to eliminate himself and his breed, and leaves the field to the optimist. If it were the truth that life were not good, then the process of natural selection, by steadily eliminating those who knew the truth and so did not care to live, would tend constantly to make error universal. No man-made inquisition has so vigorously dictated what man shall think about life as does the process of selection. Regardless of what the truth may be, man is doomed to optimism about life and about himself.

If some less than infinite God should desire to be the author of felicity—

perhaps a felicity he had not yet fully achieved for himself—and should realize that there were a million chances of failure to one of success, how better could he have set the stage to find that rare chance! Given optimism, energy, aspiration, and fecundity, life proceeds to explore every possibility. A million species, with innumerable minor variants within their limits, are treading as many labyrinths in search of the life that is good in itself. For every form of life that still pursues the quest, numberless others have failed or have surrendered, perchance leaving hints of their existence in fossils in the rocks.

As this search proceeds, its methods become more organized, more complex, and more refined. In man there enters some element of design. He appraises possibilities, weighs chances. In some slight degree he undertakes deliberately to avoid the numberless turns of the labyrinth which lead to futility and defeat, and to select those ways which have greater probability of success. What though there are a million ways to make a watch that will not tell the time, and but one way to make one that will! One way in a million is enough for him. He will find that way.

The philosopher is a man who to some moderate and feasible extent has rebelled against that tyranny of life which compels to optimism. He dares to be free and to face the truth. As Schopenhauer remarked, he who wants comfort should go to the priests and leave the philosophers alone. It is not that he can be wholly free from the Great Inquisition. He knows that he must conform or cease to be. He must believe in life or be sunk without a trace. But he gets a taste of freedom. He rebels and takes a chance. He explores the edge of the precipice and looks into the abyss. Sometimes, determined not to submit to servitude, he tells us what he sees.

In the chapter on "The Rebel" in the writer's biography of Bellamy, there is quoted his penetrating comment on "The Charm of Wickedness." He shook his fist at fate. He defied the Great Inquisition. Had he carried that rebellion to the ultimate limit, we might not know that he had lived. But he carried it far enough to get a fresh look at life—far enough to give him somewhat of an outside view of the maze he trod.

Should a god or a fate that would set men on this quest for felicity allow them any rebellion whatsoever? Why not make the Great Inquisition absolute, and make optimism universal so far as conviction as to the value of life is concerned? Does not allowance of any degree of rebellion risk man's disillusion and pessimism, and so the ending of the search for felicity?

Not at all. Many paths of the maze lead into blind pockets, in which there may be many passages, but no way out. The spirit of rebellion, if not too extreme, leads men to try to climb up above the course of life, to survey the maze, to abandon whole areas of blind passages, perhaps made familiar and homelike by much travel, and to strike out in new directions where the way seems open. A moderate amount of rebellion increases the chance of ultimate success.

Rebellion and reappraisal are the peculiar functions of the philosopher. The Great Inquisition tolerates in him a certain audacity and even insolence, particularly when his insolence is successful. One suspects that the Great Inquisition is itself somewhat at sea, and hopes that the philosopher may give it some suggestions.

How shall we judge a philosopher? Not by the impeccable sequence of his logic; not by his faultlessness in knowing the passwords of his cult; but rather by his actual rebellion against the compulsion to universal optimism. Does he defy the Great Inquisition? Does he have some clearness of sight in observing things as they actually are, and does he tell us the very truth of what he sees? Has his critical eye from the vantage point of genius ranged over a vast extent of the maze, and has he seen paths or channels that avoid the blind pockets in which men have been wasting out their lives? Does he justify hope of an open road to felicity? Has he honestly and without paternal fiction estimated the reasonableness of that hope? Has he pictured and charted that course to us so that we can see the way? As we examine the way he has pointed out does it seem to combine absence of delusion and illusion with promise of achievement?

These are fair tests of the true philosopher. And to a large degree Edward Bellamy meets them. He rebelled. There was no question he dared not ask. He examined the maze of life as from a great height. He developed a skill that was genius in finding new and surprising points of view from which to appraise things as they are. He lived intensely.

While a young man, Edward Bellamy recorded in "The Religion of Solidarity" his best thought as to what seemed to him a way through the maze. This essay with some condensation and rearrangement [1] is here reproduced with his own comments on it, as his principal effort to state his ultimate philosophy.

[1] The essay, unabridged and unedited, was published in a limited edition by the Antioch Bookplate Company, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1940, for the benefit of those especially interested.

I. THE RELIGION OF SOLIDARITY

INTRODUCTION

Some men lack any sense of musical quality. A Mendelssohn symphony to them is only so much noise. If nearly all men had such limitations, then those rare persons who did express discriminating sensitiveness to musical quality might have the reputation of talking meaningless gibberish. Expressions of sensitiveness to natural beauty are often actually so appraised by persons to whom, as Wordsworth remarked,

> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.

Is it not possible that individuals appear now and then who have areas of sensitiveness distinctively beyond the range of most men—who catch the "music of the spheres" to which nearly all of us are deaf? This is no mystical question, but one as scientifically reasonable as the inquiry whether a dog can hear high-pitched sounds that are inaudible to man, or whether a bat flying in the night has some sense not possessed by humans which enables it to avoid the trees in its path.

Repeatedly in Bellamy's writings we come upon descriptions of experiences which most men never have. Before we attribute these to fantasy or mysticism should we not consider the possibility that his organism was sensitive beyond that of the average person? Recently I talked with a man who, without looking at a timepiece, could tell time almost to the exact minute at any hour of the day or night. Other men have unexplained capacity for solving intricate mathematical problems. In reading Edward Bellamy's "Religion of Solidarity," and certain other of his accounts, as of hearing "music ineffable," I believe it is well to consider the possibility that he was not simply using fanciful or allegorical language, but was describing actual experiences to which many would be less sensitive. Some persons will find, especially in the introductory paragraphs of his essay, descriptions of experiences they have had almost as keenly as he, but which they never have expressed, or satisfactorily explained to themselves.

I should like this paper to be read to me when I am about to die. This tribute I may render without conceit to the boy who wrote it.

It was written in 1874, when I was twenty-four, and represents the germ of what has been ever since my philosophy of life. I never offered it for publication. It is crude and redundant in style, and contains some obvious defects in ratiocinations, lost links which I could now supply, but I have never cared to do so.

I could say also much more on the same theme; I could draw from my later experiences, expand it into a volume. This maybe I shall sometime do, should I continue in this state of existence. But I have always been slow to publish my opinion concerning these supreme matters. Yet by this time I begin to feel that this is my ripe judgment of life, and that I should be justified in putting it forth as such.

Comment by Edward Bellamy, added to the manuscript of "The Religion of Solidarity" in 1887.

THE ESSAY

I

THE emotions of pleasurable melancholy and of wistful yearning produced by a beautiful landscape are matters of universal experience, a commonplace of poetry. This mental experience seems to consist of a vague desire to enter into, to possess, and be a part of the beauty before the eye, to come into some closer union with it than is possible consistently with the conditions of our natures. . . . It is the disappointment of the desire after a more perfect communion.

How often in the brooding warmth and stillness of summer nights, when the senses are fairly oppressed with natural beauty, and the perfumed air is laden with voluptuous solicitations, does the charm of nature grow so intense that it seems almost personal, while under its influence the senses are sublimed to an ecstasy. It is then that some almost palpable barrier seems to hold back the soul from merging with the being toward which it so passionately tends.

Sometimes with the storm wind, with moonlit waters, with wooded glens and purling brooks, with the solitary soul of mid-ocean, with lovely mountain tops, with the sunset eternally glowing over the rim of the rolling earth, with the dewy freshness of the ever-virginal morning, with the new and tender pulse of spring, the thronging life, the voluptuous languor of summer, the restfulness of autumn; with these all and with other innumerable aspects of nature, the human spirit sympathizes; and in this communion, despite the tinge of melancholy resulting from its imperfect consummation, finds one of its chiefest consolations and asylums.

Thus continually does the spirit in man betray affinity with nature by vague and seemingly purposeless longings to attain a more perfect sympathy with it. So far as this universal and strongly marked instinct can be distinctly interpreted, it indicates in human nature some element common with external nature, toward which it is attracted, as with the attraction of a part toward a whole, and with a violence that oftentimes renders us painfully conscious of the rigorous confines of our individual organisms. This restless and discontented element is not at home in the personality, its union with it seems mechanical rather than chemical, rather of position than of essence. It is homesick for a vaster mansion than the personality

affords, with an unconquerable yearning, a divine discontent tending elsewhither.

The emotion induced in us by the monuments of bygone life are of the sort that rebel against the conditions of our organisms as persons. How often has it happened to each of us to stand before some ruined specimen of ancient handiwork, some dead city or deserted site. The place is associated with the lives of generations long since mouldered away . . . We are conscious of a sense of loss at having had no part in the skein of life that once ravelled and tangled on this very spot. We are conscious of a repining at the barrier of time that has included and shut us up in today.

The experience is very similar, when, as we muse on the glories of future ages, the vision of the world to be rises before us, and we feel that in essence we belong no more to today than to yesterday and tomorrow. Such limitations appear arbitrary and irrelevant, impertinent though impregnable. Hungry, not just for more life, but for all the life there is, we count ourselves robbed of the days when we were not and of those in which we shall not be. He is conscious of a painful incongruity between the soul, so easily contemporary with all time, and his individuality weighted down to a little point of time. The mind is aware of a discontent that, but for its conscious impotence, would be indignation that it should be thus unequal to itself. It has the aspirations of a god with the limitations of a clod. The soul that seeks to enfold and animate the universe, that takes all being for its province, and with such potential compass and desire, has for its sole task the animating of one human animal in a corner of an insignificant planet.

Now who can doubt that the human soul has more in common with that life of all time and all things toward which it so eagerly goes out, than with that narrow, isolated, and incommodious individuality, the thrall of time and space, to which it so reluctantly, and with such a sense of belittlement and degradation, perforce returns?

Very often must it happen to everyone when wandering abroad at night, to feel the eyes drawn upward as by a sense of majestic, overshadowing presence. . . . The soul of the gazer, drawn on and on, from star to star, still travels toward infinity. He is strange to the limitations of terrestrial things; he is out of the body. He is oppressed with the grandeur of the universal frame; its weight seems momentarily to rest upon his shoulders. But with a start and a wrench as of life from soul the personality reasserts itself, and with a temporary sense of strangeness he fits himself once again

to the pigmy standards about him. The experiences which have been mentioned are but examples of the sublime, ecstatic, impersonal emotions, transcending the scope of personality or individuality, manifested by human nature, and of which the daily life of every person affords abundant instances.

What, then, is the view of human nature thus suggested? On the one hand is the personal life, an atom, a grain of sand on a boundless shore, a bubble on a foam-flecked ocean, a life bearing a proportion to the mass of past, present, and future life, so infinitesimal as to defy the imagination. Such is the importance of the person. On the other hand is a certain other life, as it were a spark of the universal life, insatiable in aspiration, greedy of infinity, asserting solidarity with all things and all existence, even while subject to the limitations of space and time and all other of the restricting conditions of the personality. On the one hand is a little group of faculties of the individual, unable even to cope with the few and simple conditions of material life, wretchedly failing, for the most part, to secure tolerable satisfaction for the physical needs of the race, and at best making slow and painful progression. On the other hand, in the soul, is a depth of divine despair over the insufficiency of this existence, already seemingly too large, and a passionate dream of immortality, the vision of a starving man whose fancy revels in full tables.

Such is the estate of man, and such his dual life. . . . This dual life, personal and impersonal, as individual and as universal, goes far to explain the riddle of human nature and of human destiny.

[*Here some of the manuscript seems to be missing.*]

II

Since it is a common error to imagine the impersonal consciousness as altogether vague and shadowy, while the personal consciousness or soul life is the only real and substantial hold on existence, it will be well by way of correcting this notion to advert to some of the numerous instances in our daily spiritual experience in which we closely approximate the impersonal mood. For instance, in the degree in which we realize beauty of any sort we approach the impersonal condition, and obtain a hint of the mode of our impersonal consciousness. It is only when we can say that we forget ourselves, and in a certain mystic way seem to share the life of

the thing admired, that we taste the pure and high felicity of a realization of a perfect sense of beauty. . . . Those mental states which we call the noblest, broadest, and most inspired, the most intense and satisfying of our psychical felicities, in fine all those emotions and moods by which we are greater than our personalities, and which constitute the larger and far more essential part of our lives—all these are but the activity of the greater self, the impersonal consciousness within us.

The fact of consciousness which most clearly witnesses to the impersonality of the soul is that whereas the animal functions are constant quantities, varying only with their supplies of nutriment and stimulus, the soul is most inconstant, as if it were continually coming and going, now dull and lifeless, now again vivified, glowing, expanding as it is touched with some inspiration of enthusiasm or some sentiment of sympathy with the larger life. I know of nothing with which to compare this continual flux and reflux but to the phenomena presented by the Northern Lights, which on a winter night now irradiate the whole vault of the heavens with torrents of light, throwing their spray over the earth, and again sinking away to the horizon, leaving the sky black and dead. . . . "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." So is the soul of man born again in every fresh inbreathing of the soul of solidarity.

In view of such phenomena, where is the claim of the personality of the soul, and its sufficient, self-comprehending consciousness? I can as easily imagine the little inlets of the ocean coast boasting that the tides that daily throb through them are spontaneous with them, as a man boasting that these tides and tempests of the soul arise within his own personality, and do not rather come from the uttermost parts of the universe.

. . . Individuality, personality, partiality, is segregation, is partition, is confinement; is, in fine, a prison, and happy are we if its walls grow not wearisome ere our seventy years' sentence expires.

To pursue this argument, it appears to me (the testimony of his own consciousness is the only evidence that any person can receive in this matter) that the last effort in introspection discloses in the penetralia of the soul an impersonal consciousness. Tracing to its awful source the river of life within us, what do we find it, we who claim so confidently to be personal, self-comprehending, self-complete entities? Will anyone be so bold as to say that he can fathom, even in untranslatable emotions, that

fount of being, whence wells the sense of existence? Ponder well. Do we not feel ourselves at once a part of, and external to, the last impregnable consciousness, that citadel of being? We are at once it and of it, itself, yet not all of it. In fine, it is impersonal. It is the witness of our life, and we are the witness of its life. With nothing are we more identical, yet it is as awful to us as infinity, unspeakable as God. Ask for no heavens to open nor firmament to dissolve that you may be left faced with God and see the sum end of things. Steadfastly look into the well of your own life and know the powerlessness of human tongues to express its endless depths, its boundless contents. . . .

There are few of an introspective habit who are not haunted with a certain very definite sense of a second soul, an inner serene and passionless ego, which regards the experiences of the individual with a superior curiosity, as it were, a half pity. It is especially in moments of the deepest anguish or of the maddest gaiety, that is, in the intensest strain of the individuality, that we are conscious of the dual soul as of a presence serenely regarding from another plane of being the agitated personality. It is at such times as that we become, not by force of argument, but by spontaneous experience, strictly subjective to ourselves, that is, the individuality becomes objective to the universal soul, that eternal subjective. The latter regards the former as a god is conceived to look upon man, in an attitude passionless, disinterested, yet pitiful. Often does it happen in scenes of revelry or woe that we are thus suddenly translated, looking down calmly upon our passion-wrung selves, and then as with an effort, once more enduring the weeds or tinsel of our personal estates. At such times we say that we have been out of ourselves; but in reality we have been into ourselves; we have only just realized the greater half of our being. We have momentarily lived in the infinite part of our being, a region ever open and waiting for us, if we will but frequent its highlands. We call such an experience abnormal; it should be normal.

We dwell needlessly in the narrow grotto of the individual life, counting as strange, angelic visitants the sunbeams that struggle thither, not being able to believe that the upper universe is our world to live in, the grotto of the personality a mere workshop. We are content to conjecture from occasional intuitions a world that we should constantly recognize. The half-conscious god that is man is called to recognize his divine parts. The soul then is what it would be. It has the infinity it craves.

Spread your wings; you will reach no horizon. Cast out the lead; it will strike no bottom. Our little wells are filled from this eternal life; our souls are not islands in the void, but peninsulas forming one continent of life within the universe. It is man's own indolence that will inhabit but one corner of the open universe, a corner of himself. Let him assume his birthright, and live out, live up, in others, in the past, in the future, in nature, in God. There are no barriers to the soul but such as sense-bound fancy imagines. When Thales enunciated the maxim "Know thyself," he propounded a problem not to be solved. The dual existence of man is at once infinite, and infinitesimal and particular.

I do not assert that the higher universal life is at once realizable by merely resolving thereon. Like his present endowment of mental faculties, which man has slowly and painfully evolved since the savage state, the full consciousness and active enjoyment of the universal soul will be slow and difficult in being realized. Potentially, indeed, the universal life is manifesting itself within us by countless unmistakable signs, in the mind of Shakespeare as in the cave dwellers. It remains for us, by culture of our spiritual cognitions, by education, by a drawing forth of our partially latent universal instincts, to develop into a consciousness as coherent, definite, and indefeasible as that of our individual life, the all-identical life of the universe within us.

Nor is this tendency of the human soul to a more perfect realization of its solidarity with the universe, by the development of instincts partly or wholly latent, altogether a theory. It is already an observed fact, a matter of history. Sentimental love of the beautiful and sublime in nature, the charm which mountains, sea, and landscape so potently exercise upon the modern mind through a subtle sense of sympathy, is a comparatively modern and recent growth of the human mind. The ancients knew, or at least say, nothing of it. It is a curious fact that in no classical author are to be found any allusions to a class of emotions and sentiments that take up such large space in modern literature. It is almost within a century, in fact, that this susceptibility of the soul seems to have been developed. It is not therefore surprising that its language should still be vague. I am sure that much of the unrest and reaching out after the infinite, which is the peculiar characteristic of this age, is the result of this new sense. If culture can add such a province as this to human nature within a century, it is surely not

visionary to count on a still more complete future development of the same group of subtle psychical faculties.

III

The acceptance of the view of life which has now been outlined should not breed a discontent with ourselves as individuals. The personality should not be contemned, should not be worn with half-heartedness and repining. It is dignified in being the channel, the expression, of the universal. In this view it has as sound a right of being as the universal itself. Its joys we do well to push to the uttermost, interpreting them by the universal and thus lending them sublimity. Its sorrows we should not, on the other hand, contemn nor bear too heavily, but tenderly pity from the higher plane the bereavements of the individual, accepting their monitions toward the universal, the all-pervading life. In that lofty, over-looking region, in that supernal, passionless atmosphere, learn to make a home and build there an everlasting habitation, whither to retire when the personal life is over-clouded, its windows darkened, and all its functions palsied with the bitterness of disappointment and the anguish of bereavement.

Perhaps the relations of the universal and individual lives may be more distinctly brought before the mind by imagining them under the types, respectively, of the centripetal and centrifugal forces as illustrated in celestial mechanics. The instinct of universal solidarity, of the identity of our lives with all life, is the centripetal force which binds together in certain orbits all orders of beings. In fine, the instinct of solidarity in the moral universe correlates with the attraction of gravitation in the material world.

The fact of individuality with its tendency to particularizations is the centrifugal force which hinders the universal fusion, and preserves the variety in unity which seems the destined condition of being. Thus these mutually balancing forces play each its necessary part. It is the instinct of personality which leads man, weary of exploring the universe and striving to grasp the relations of it to other orders of being, to take refuge in the bundle of mental and physical experiences which he calls himself, as the only thing of which he is absolutely sure, the sole rock in the midst of an illimitable ocean. It is this instinct which at times sends him off, as it were, on a tangent from his orbit, in defiance of the centripetal instinct of solidar-

ity, in mad self-assertion, in wild rebellion against subordination or coherency with anything.

It is this vicious habit of regarding the personality as an ultimate fact instead of a mere temporary effection of the universal that at times overcomes the mind with a sense of utter and unnecessary isolation, of inexpressible loneliness, of a great gulf fixed between the successive personalities of a single individuality and all others. It is this instinct which lends its horror of quiet darkness to death, for death is the dissolution of the individuality and the enfranchisement of the atom of the universal which has been segregated in it. On the other hand it is the instinct of solidarity, however misconstrued or unconfessed, which lends mere consciousness of greatness, otherwise unaccountable, a sense of majesty, utterly, nay ludicrously, beyond that which is warranted by the proportion of his personality to the sum of personalities. It is this which makes a man, however good his will, unable to isolate himself from the general frame of things, or to conceive of the universe as going on without him. The universe never did and never will go on without him. It is this which renders it all essential for his comfort, to feel that he is acting a part of some universal plan or frame of things, thus making some sort of religion or philosophy indispensable to him, and rendering the notion of unconnected, isolated action abhorrent to his soul.

The opposition in human nature of the two ideas of solidarity and personality may be further illustrated by describing as an expression of the former the sense of the sublime, of the grand, or whatever may be called the instinct of infinity, and on the other hand as an expression of the personality, the desire of being circumscribed, shut in, and bounded, the aversion to vague limitations, the sense of coziness (if I may venture to give a philosophical meaning to that peculiar word) or what may be called the instinct of finity. To the latter class of feelings the former seems to open an abstract, unreal, remote, and frigid cloudland, utterly repugnant to its own warm and cheerful, if confined, precincts.

In turn, the instinct of finity to its opposite seems synonymous with pettiness, with infinitesimality, suggestive of a mean, base, and narrow scope, a low-lying, sensuous atmosphere. Their opposition, whereof the mental experience of every reader will have furnished abundant instances, is another testimony of consciousness to the dual constitution of the human soul.

Much sorrow of man comes from his efforts, in imperfect understanding of his own nature, to crowd his universal life into his personal experience, to grasp and realize with the functions of the finite the suggestions of the infinite. He is thus led to make too much of the joys and sorrows and circumstances of the person. Conscious of universal instincts, his mistake lies in expecting the experiences of the individual to be of like scope. He would have the relationships of the individual endowed with the attributes of the universal. Conscious of the individual life, his constant effort is to express, as it were, universal instincts in terms of the individuality. No wonder human joy has such an undertone of sadness, and all the concern of the individual life seems but vanity of vanities. It is the mistake of requiring the finite to meet the criterion of the infinite. The joys and sorrows of the individual are adapted to its scope. To seek in them any completer significance is to tempt disappointment. What man complains of as an incurable incongruity between his soul and its external surroundings and the scope by them imposed, is in the stricter truth an incongruity between the two aspects of his own nature. The remedy is ceasing to confuse them and the rendering to each the things of each.

. . . Personalities cannot absorb each other; their essence is diversity. For our personalities, therefore, we cannot expect a perfect intimacy free from all incompatibility and antagonism, but may only solace ourselves with occasional realization of an ecstasy of ineffable tenderness, transitory glimpses of that oneness of our universal parts which over-arches and includes all individual diversities. Looking for a perfect outward harmony and fitting together of personalities, even of those best adapted and most passionately attached, we shall ever meet with bitter disappointment, but in the higher plane of this larger life we can always realize that fusion and identity that is the heart of all love.

So, too, in that other great experience of the individual, bereavement by death, if we are able to interpret the individual by the universal, we find great consolation for the death of a friend in reflecting that he has but given up that part of him in which he was diverse and separate from us; that is, his personality, to exist henceforth, as far as we know, wholly in the part in which he is one with us and one with all. Truly, not with our bodily passions can we sympathize with his new life. He no longer bears those traits of personality by which these were roused. Our body and the physical sympathies born of it must needs be bereaved; also those mental traits (equally peculiarities of the individuality) which formerly sym-

pathized with the dead. All these are mortal and miss the mortal parts of the dead. For this bereavement there is no remedy, and it is worthy the tribute of tears. But our real life, the indefeasible consciousness of being, the life of solidarity, which, connected with the body, yet transcended its conditions, we may legitimately believe to survive its decay, nay, perhaps, to be then first set free by that decay, and by this higher life at once in us and in all, we are united to the living and to the dead. For this life of solidarity there is neither past nor present, mortality nor immortality, but life ever present, which dons and doffs the countless and varied guises of individuality as one puts on and takes off his garments.

As individuals, then, we have nothing in common with the dead. In that attitude we cannot commune with them, but as universals we are one with them. Nothing should greatly shake those who have their foundations so deeply fixed. But if we reverse this philosophy and interpret the universal by the individual, then, indeed, our plight is pitiable. We are seeking to super-add the universal to the individual, the infinite to the finite, and for result have an incongruous, unthinkable conception more fruitful in vague questioning and in repining than in belief. Claiming a most undesirable immortality for personal traits that even in this life in the course of a few years change so utterly, we cannot consent to regard as perishable those idiosyncrasies, those mental squints and biases, which by the variation of defects are the only marks of intellectualities. It seems as if without these we should lose our identity. And so indeed we should lose our identity as individuals, so factitious, unsubstantial, easily lost a thing is that, a thing of an earmark more or less. . . .

The individuality is of so little importance, of such trifling scope, that it should matter little to us what renunciations of its things we make, what inequalities, what deprivations in its experiences we endure. We should hold our lives loosely, and not with the convulsive grip of one who counts personal life his all. The workman does not sacrifice himself to his tools, so should we not seek to serve the individual, which is the serf of the universal, by any sacrifice of those universal instincts, whereof the chief is unselfishness, which constitute true mortality.

IV

Our lives are comedy. In the universal there is no tragedy, and in the realm of the individual the experiences are too trifling for the dignity of

tragedy. Melancholy and grief, fate or accident, never triumph over the true life of man, only over that transient and unimportant phase of it known as the personality. Justly regarded, human life is a delightful game of passions and calculating, superior in interest to chess on account of the sense of partial identity with the personalities which serve us as puppets, while at the same time that sense of identity, at least to a philosopher's mind, is so incomplete as to prevent the interest from attaining a painful degree of intensity. . . .

Love between individuals is the attraction between kindred particles, but the greatest of all loves, at once the most enthusiastic, the most sustaining, the most insatiable love of loves is that of an individual for his remnant, the universe. This is the love of god by whatever name men may choose to call it. The manner in which love asserts itself between individuals is illustrative of its genesis in the law of solidarity. It is the nature of our souls to fuse together, for they are one, but by the conditions of individuality, the particle in each one of us is, as it were, fenced about and shut into itself. There it pines in loneliness, breeding infinite discontent and prompting all manner of god-like movings, which mightily disquiet the individual as to what may be the nature of this inmate which spurns in such lordly fashion surroundings which fit the individual so well.

It holds to reason that the restless soul will take advantage of any relaxation in the rigor of the conditions of the individuality to flow out toward its fellow particles and essay fusion with them. This relaxation may result either from a correlation of the physical or mental faculties of individuals, or it may result from habitual association and the mutual accommodation of faculties resulting therefrom. The sexual relation is the greatest example of that physical correlation which, approximating the individualities and relaxing the rigor of their natural attitude of mutual antagonism and exclusiveness, affords an opportunity for the confluence in at least a partial sympathy of the roles of lovers, and the bliss resulting from the consciousness of even this imperfect union is a proof of the common essence of souls. But after all how imperfect is this union, even when helped to the utmost by physical conditions. . . .

There is a lust of soul for soul dwarfing the lust of body for body, as the universal dwarfs the individual; a lust insatiable, a passion hopeless yet entrancing, sweeter in desire than all others in consummation. The poet lover finds not much difference whether the bodily embraces of his mistress be granted or denied him. He knows that nothing could satisfy his passion,

and counts the physical possession a thing almost indifferent to the attainment of his dreams.

Thus, much of the hunger of souls for each other is born of the physical correlation of the individualities. But such a sympathy may spring as well from a mental correlation which is only of the individual. An adaptation of mind to mind such that their natural antagonisms are relaxed produces this form of partial realization of soul solidarity. Intellectual companionships are of this nature.

But there is another kind of soul sympathy and tendency to oneness. I refer to that which springs from family life, that which endears with an altogether peculiar and intimate attachment brothers and sisters, the members of one household from childhood; this, too, without any apparent original correlation, mental or physical, between the persons. Nevertheless the correlation exists, only here it is the result of the attrition of habitual intercourse. As the roughest surfaces, by dint of constantly rubbing against each other, become at last smooth or adapt their qualities to each other's forms, so persons associated in the close and constant relationships of family life become at last so fitted to each other that their souls naturally flow together. This is the genesis of family love. Nay, it is this superinduced correlation of habit that lends an element, frequently the largest element, to post-nuptial love. It is the gentle work of time that mends the blunders of the blind god, and binds closely individuals with but small original physical or mental correlation. . . . Individualities may or may not match well—here is room for choice; but souls always match, for they are inhalations of one breath, tongues of one flame. . . .

The union of physical influences with those of a more purely moral nature, produces more remarkable effects than either class alone; as, when under the inspiration of martial music, combining with the instinct of nationalism, the heart of the soldier melts in a happy rapture of self-devotion. He is impatient to throw his life away and rejoices in his body as a sacrifice which he can make for his country, even as the priest rejoices in a victim for the altar of his god.

It is this mixture of the physical and moral influences that gives its wonderful power to music combined with religious service. Room fails me for the crowding illustrations of this point. The beauties, sublimities, and infinities of nature are, however, the most constant reminders to the instinct of solidarity. The sky and the sea are two types of infinity that should always suffice to recall us from absorption in the individual side of

our nature. They are the material symbols of the soul's infinity, and as the piety of the Romanist revives at the sight of the crucifix, so should the religion of universal solidarity stir freshly in us whenever our eyes are raised to the bottomless vault of heaven or scan the unbounded sea.

V

In the religion of solidarity is found the only rational philosophy of the moral instincts. Unselfishness, self-sacrifice, is the essence of morality. On the theory of ultimate individualities, unselfishness is madness; but on the theory of the dual life, of which the life of solidarity is abiding and that of the individual transitory, unselfishness is but the sacrifice of the lesser self to the greater self, an eminently rational and philosophical proceeding *per se,* and entirely regardless of ulterior considerations. The moral intuitions which impel to self-sacrifice are the instincts of the life of solidarity asserting themselves against the instincts of the individuality. Hence the majesty beyond appeal in their monitions. As the individuality has its appetites and passions, so the universal life has its passions of self-debasement, its rebellious, self-torturing sympathies, its generous longings. The individuality would always sacrifice other individualities to itself, but the soul of solidarity within us, equally indifferent to all individualities, having in view only the harmony of the universal life as its exigencies require, impels now the sacrifice of my individuality, now of yours.

Perhaps it may well be said here that according to the religion of solidarity unselfishness is as inconsistent with undue self-abnegation as with undue self-assertion. It requires in all cases the fulfillment of the instinct of the whole, which may indifferently coincide with the assertion or abnegation of any particular individuality. A bias in favor of altruism is as obnoxious to its principles as the contrary bias in favor of self.

If the thought occur that the soul of solidarity, so removed from all affectations of individuality, can scarcely be supposed to inspire principles of individual conduct, it suffices to remember that the soul of solidarity is primarily an instinct of identity or oneness. In the inorganic world we may imagine it as the attraction of cohesion. In the various orders of animated nature it appears in the shape of varied laws of mutual independence and attractions. Manifested in men it takes the form of loyalty or patriotism, philanthropy or sympathy. According to the different forms of individualizations which it animates, the soul of solidarity variously but

invariably exerts its centripetal tendency, but its law is always to bind the members of each order first to their own system, and then to the sum of all systems, even as in celestial mechanics the force of gravitation first and most evidently binds the single systems together, and then sends all systems alike revolving about some great single center. Thus it is that men are conscious first of the solidarity of the race; then more dimly of that of the universe.

The secret of many diversities in human character consists in the comparative development of the universal and individual life. Poets, mystics, dreamers, seers, and all of that ilk are marked by an overpowering sense of their element of universal soul. On the other hand, men of affairs, energetic, self-asserting, pushing people have in general their universal instincts imperfectly developed. Given great powers, of such men are made Napoleons and Caesars. Yet such as these are great in the individual plane only. He who has but glimmering visions of the universal stands on a plane infinitely above them. They are great as individuals, a sort of pigmy greatness not to be desired.

All human knowledge consists in the apprehension of differences and resemblances, discords and harmonies of the universe, in analysis and synthesis, in distinction and generalization. The former or analysing faculties pertain peculiarly to natures strongly developed on the individual side. The latter, the synthetical faculty, the disposition to perceive harmonies and unities rather than discords and differences, is characteristic of natures more open on the side toward the universe, in which the instincts of general solidarity are more vivid. What we call talent exists with characters in which the individual side is predominant; but genius, which is but a vivid realization of the universal, is the dower only of natures dominated by impulses from that side. The genius is never self-conscious while the afflatus is upon him. He is beside himself and thus delivers his oracle of the universal, himself a priest of the infinite.

Telescopic and microscopic are the two windows through which man looks out, the former opening on the infinite, the latter on the infinitesimal. Neither window should be obscured or ignored. Not the Indian Buddhist in ecstatic contemplation, seeking to merge himself in God in disregard of his active status as an individual; not the self-seeker in the insanity of individualism, concentrating his being in microscopic activities (equally microscopic whether they concern faggots or empires, since they are pur-

sued in the spirit of individualism); neither of these is the ideal man. But rather he whose spirit dwells in the stars and in all time, but whose hands are as deft with the most menial as with the mightiest tasks through which the promptings of the soul of solidarity can find expression, who turns his hands with equal readiness to founding empires and to washing beggars' feet, holding all tasks in equal honor, since with him the infinite motive utterly overshadows the deed itself, at best infinitesimal in all questions of its success or failure.

It is indeed a pitiable endeavor that seeks to satisfy the craving for grandeur and boundlessness inherent in the soul by piling Pelion on Ossa in achievements undertaken in the spirit of personal aggrandizement. Alexander, thus seeking to fill the void within him, must needs eternally weep for new worlds to conquer, although forever conquering. Yet there is a possibility, a secret of satisfying even this hunger. But it is not by quantity of deeds, but by quality of motives, the spirit in which the deeds are done. The largest deeds of the individual must forever remain infinitesimal, but the spirit of the meanest deed may be infinite, all-satisfying. Poor Alexander had his problem by the wrong end. As individuals we are indeed limited to a narrow spot in today, but as universalists we inherit all time and space. More and more be it the end of our philosophy to make the larger life the true and central, the individual inferior and accidental.

VI

There is a conscious solidarity of the universe toward the intuition of which we must struggle, that it may become to us, not a logical abstraction, but a felt and living fact. As individuals we shall never be complete. The completest man lacks the completion of the rest of the universe. Part, then, with the feeling of the externality to the universe, which, coupled with the sense of utter ignorance and powerlessness, is so full of despair. Believe that your sympathy with infinite being, infinite extension, infinite variety, is a pledge of identity. Above all, disabuse your mind of the notion that this life is essentially incomplete and preliminary in its nature and destined to issue in some final state. For this notion there is no warrant in reason nor in proper interpretation of intuitions. Time is not vestibule of eternity, but a part of it. We are now living our immortal lives. This present life is its own perfect consummation, its own reason and excuse. The life of infinite range that our intuitions promise us lies even now open round about us.

The avenues leading to it, the vistas opening upon it, are those universal instincts that continually stir us, and which if followed out would lead us thither. It is our own dull lack of faith that causes us to regard them as of no present but only of future significance, that places our heaven ever in some dim land of tomorrow, instead of all about us in the eternal present.

The individuality dies; the soul never. It is inconceivable how it could taste an immortality more perfect than it now enjoys. Nor can a life of wider scope be imagined than that the soul already takes hold of by its universal instincts, and which by the culture of those instincts is even now, more and infinitely more, realizable by us. But as the Christian believer strives that he may enter into the mystical kingdom of heaven, so also the infinite enlargement of life spoken of awaits only those who strive after it in a like spirit.

In the universal instincts within us we are given sure and certain lodestones that we must interpret by meditation and follow with enthusiasm and faith, whereof the steadily increasing force and clearness of our intuitions will afford constant justification. Surely a more engaging mode of life than its own infinite enlargement we could not set before us. What respect can be claimed for aspirations after other forms and higher grades of life by those who are too dull to imagine the present infinite potentialities of their souls? When will men learn to interpret their intuitions of heaven and infinite things in the present, instead of forever in the future?

Lest it be supposed that the theory of life set forth in this essay is necessarily atheistical in its conclusions, it may be well to suggest what should be quite obvious, that the method of individualizations, by which a man combines a personal and impersonal being, illustrates a possible mode of existence of superior beings or of a Supreme Being, a being as distinctly personal as is man and . . .

[*A note by the author, apparently added in 1887:*]

The last pages seem to be lost, but as I recall the paper, there were but a few more paragraphs, one of them setting forth that the religion of solidarity was in no way inconsistent with belief in a personal God. Since we ourselves are at once personals and individuals, so superior beings might be conceived by the supreme being. I believe the argument was so.

POSTIL

In considering "The Religion of Solidarity" we can test it by several criteria. Does it seem to be free from that compulsion to optimism which holds men under servitude? Do the conclusions seem to be arrived at freely, and not by force? Do the proposals seem to be in accord with the nature of things? Are they free from elements that do not ring true to experience? Does the way which he indicated seem to be one which the human spirit can take with dignity, with self-respect, with integrity, and with reasonable hope?

"The Religion of Solidarity" has the limitations which its author pointed out in a prefatory note written thirteen years later. It is a fragment, and not a finished chart of a way of life. Yet, even with these limitations, to a very considerable degree it meets the tests we have indicated. This philosophy served as an incentive and a guide to his own life. It had practical consequences. We can respect the personality and the way of life of Edward Bellamy, of which his philosophy was both an effect and a cause. The way of practical life which it implies is at one with the highest vision of the brotherhood of man. It does not do violence to what man's intuition has appraised as the best there is in him.

In Brahmin philosophy the universal soul—by whatever name it is called—is mature, complete, perfect:

> The one unborn, unending,
> Unchanging and unblending! [1]

In the process by which "souls go forth from me" and "come back unto me," the universal finds self-expression, but does not grow or change itself into something different from what it was.

Bellamy's writing does not inform us whether his mind went beyond that concept. It would seem to be more in accord with the dynamic quality of the western mind, more in accord with our feeling of reality, as well as more conducive to interest and purposefulness, for us to think of a growing and evolving universal, which, while producing individual lives and drawing them back into itself, was itself growing and changing in that

[1] *The Bhagavad-Gita,* Sir Edwin Arnold, trans. *The Harvard Classics,* Vol. 45 (New York, P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), p. 849.

process. During his life a man works, aspires, overcomes difficulties, achieves, fails, suffers, enjoys; and grows in the process. He does more than reproduce a small cycle in the endless round of life. To some degree he creates something which never existed before. When the individual life merges again into the universal life, that which returns is not the same as that which came out. The process of living has been a process of refining, organizing, disciplining, purifying, sublimating, and creating. The individual life contributes to the universal life the results of its living, and thereafter the universal life is forever different. The quality of the universal life is composed, at least to a substantial degree, of the products of all the individual lives which it has put forth, and which have returned to it with increase or decrease of quality.

Ask how the process began, how the universal life had the first element of purpose which caused it to put forth individual life, and we get back to the never-answered residual question of beginnings. What chiefly concerns us is not the origin of the process, but the fact of its existence.

All thinking finally reduces itself to analogies. We are helped in getting a picture of this concept by the analogy of life on the earth. As plants and animals live and die, the effects of their living do not entirely disappear. During the coal age a luxurious growth of plants of a low order, using the sun's energy, separated carbon dioxide into carbon and oxygen. The carbon was stored in the earth. The oxygen was added to the atmosphere, where it serves to support higher forms of life. Also, the trees of the forest in dying leave behind a mould which helps the later forest to grow. Life on the land feeds life in the ocean. Not all parts of the ocean have abundant life; the parts which do are those which are enriched by rivers, by immediate contact with land, or by ocean currents. On the other hand, the ocean feeds the land. The fertility of many soils is in the residue of ocean life which sank to the bottom, was compacted into rock, and ages later was lifted up to form the fertile land.

If suddenly all the effect of previous living were removed from the earth except the evolved natures of plants and animals, it is probable that no animals and few if any plants would survive. The air and water might be without adequate oxygen; the soil would be without humus; plant food minerals would be in their original form, not made quickly available by living processes. In short, not only have plants and animals themselves evolved, but they have changed the nature of the earth, creating conditions which make possible higher orders of plants and animals. Similarly in the

world of mankind what we call civilization is the residue of numberless lives that have been lived, each contributing its mite to the cultural tradition; and that accumulated cultural tradition makes possible a higher order of living for men.

The suggestion of this analogy is that the universal soul not only produces individual lives, but in the process is itself being sublimated, developed, enriched, and made into something it aspired to be, but was not. On the basis of this assumption we might say that a constant succession of individual lives is as essential to the growth of the universal soul as is the existence of the universal soul to the existence of individual lives.

Through individual lives the universal soul becomes what it aspires to be, and even by that process defines its aspirations. Granting that assumption, it would follow that the quality of individual lives becomes immeasurably significant. The best life is that which makes the greatest and best contribution to the universal soul. The manner in which men live, and the wisdom with which they define their purposes, then is of high importance.

II. EDWARD BELLAMY AND INDIA

He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.

—Boswell's *Life of Johnson*

THE question arises as to how far "The Religion of Solidarity" is original with Bellamy, and how far it is a reflection of his reading. It may be said that it has nothing in it that is new; but that, like an echo which has bounded and rebounded along the cliffs, it has come, probably by way of Emerson and Thoreau, partly direct and partly through the Neoplatonists, from the ancient East. Be that as it may, not all echoes are of equal quality. There are a very few spots on earth where echoes are incredibly fine, as in the natural amphitheater of Aesculapius in southern Greece, where normal voices at great distances are reproduced in clear, quiet distinctness, without distortion, and seemingly with the harsh and dissonant tones filtered out, so that only the sublimated, limpid elements of the distant voices reach the ear. If "The Religion of Solidarity" is an echo, it has something of that quality.

Americans like to feel that what they have is their own, and is not borrowed from foreign parts. They would have resented being consciously influenced by ancient Indian thought, and they never have been fully aware of the extent to which, in fact, they absorbed Hindu philosophy, chiefly through Emerson, who for several decades was the greatest intellectual influence of his country, but also from his Concord neighbors, Henry Thoreau and Bronson Alcott. Frederic Ives Carpenter in his *Emerson and Asia* discusses the debt of Emerson to the Neoplatonists and, partly through them and partly directly, his debt to Hindu philosophy. We are reminded of Bellamy's "Religion of Solidarity" by Carpenter's comment on "the highly spiritualized conception, described by Emerson, where 'Brahma' is the inclusive, impersonal source of energy, into which all different units return at death and are merged and lost." [1]

As discussed by Arthur Christy in *The Orient in American Transcendentalism,* the Hindu writing which most impressed Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott was the *Bhagavad-Gita.* Both in the "Religion of Solidarity"

[1] Carpenter, Frederic Ives, *Emerson and Asia* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1930), p. 135.

and in the statement of Bellamy's religious faith quoted at the end of the chapter on "The Religion of Edward Bellamy" we get the same concept as in the following from the *Bhagavad-Gita* (the Lord speaking): ". . . all things return into my nature, and then again I project them . . . again and again I emanate this whole assemblage of things . . ." [2]

In a description of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Christy writes:

> The great influence of the *Gita* lies in its eclecticism. By recognizing the irreducible diversities in human nature, and accommodating itself to idealists and materialists, men of contemplation and men of action alike, the book appealed to many minds. Every road, it said, led to the same goal; and it approved all of them, in no patronizing and indifferent manner, but with the sanction and reasonableness of age-old philosophies. Thus few books could have been more congenial to the Concordians who had adopted the eclectic method. It took up the very issues which they raised among themselves—the "same questions which exercise us," as Emerson said—and it answered them in much the same manner as they were answered in Concord. . . . It endorsed all life and labor, whether scholarly, contemplative, or manual.[3]

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* the anxious inquirer, discussing the relative merit of practical activity and speculative contemplation, asks:

> Of these twain plainly tell
> Which is the better way?

And the answer comes

> 'Tis the new scholar talks as they were two
> . . . who sees these twain as one
> Sees with clear eyes.[4]

How similar to this is Bellamy's mind! The spirit in which he sought to find his way is illustrated by a stray paragraph in a notebook:

> Be not afraid to express any true emotions or sincere intuitions for fear that it should conflict with your own previous ideas or those of others or

[2] *The Bhagavad-Gita or The Lord's Lay,* Mohini M. Chatterji, trans. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, c. 1887), p. 148.

[3] Christy, Arthur, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 28, 29.

[4] *Bhagavad-Gita,* Sir Edwin Arnold, trans., *op. cit.,* p. 823.

> the masses. . . . There are greater and more underlying harmonies than you wot of, that are completed by seeming oppositions. You cannot measure these harmonies but can only know that beauty and all truth are essential to them. It is not then for you to cut and carve and call the truth but to welcome all. So to do is faith.[5]

In one of Bellamy's notebooks he wrote:

> My mind is not stratified as that of a practical man's should be, I mean, is not divided by horizontal floors; the floors of practice and of theory, of phenomena and nomena, of physics and metaphysics, of material and psychical. Now your practical man never thinks of commingling these levels. When he starts to discuss or think in the physical plane he is in no danger of stumbling by some unlucky generalization into Metaphysics. But so it is not with me. The strata with me are like those disjointed commingled strata of rock that puzzle the geologists. I start on the practical plane but it is the will of God how long I stay there. . . . As my physics become metaphysical, so vice versa. I am intensely practical in the sense that no abstract idea is any satisfaction to me till I have realized it concretely.[6]

Again in his notebook we find:

> It is not a question which side of a subject is the true side—all are true. None can be fully argued without qualification by the others. The question is only which side of the subject is in most danger of neglect and therefore most needs to be proved. Monarchy, aristocracy, democracy—all are first principles.[7]

An interesting series of comparisons might be prepared between Bellamy's writings and those of Hindu philosophy. For instance, in discussing the latter, Christy quotes, "Brahma is that root, at base divided into Past, Present, and Future, but in their summits united; for in their heights where Brahma absorbs all, Time is also absorbed." [8] Compare this with a paragraph from one of Bellamy's notebooks: "Is the effect of a succession of time anything more than the result of the smallness of our intellectual forces which can only perceive phenomena successively? For example, an observant person will take in simultaneously the details of a picture which

[5] Unpublished papers (B2–4–6).
[6] *Ibid.* (B1–1–30).
[7] *Ibid.* (B2–4–18).
[8] Christy, Arthur, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism, op. cit.*, p. 179.

an unobservant person will require a considerable period to apprehend, and will never apprehend completely." [9]

Reading side by side the fragments of philosophy which Bellamy left behind, and the *Bhagavad-Gita,* one gets the impression that India may have furnished no small part of the soil of his philosophic thought, but that what grew in that soil was Bellamy and not India. Repeatedly we find suggestions of likeness, but almost never is there such identity of thought as sometimes occurs between Emerson's philosophy and Hindu writings. We might guess that in Hindu philosophy, by way of Emerson and Thoreau, we have much of the source of Bellamy's philosophy, as recorded in "The Religion of Solidarity" and in some of his other writings. Yet, while Bellamy read Emerson and Thoreau, he did not imitate them. A reading of his "Religion of Solidarity" and Emerson's "Over-Soul" reveals an almost complete absence of inharmony between them, but nothing like identity. With due allowance for the differences in manner of thinking and of writing, either one might have written the work of the other. But they are not the same. Bellamy quotes or paraphrases Emerson less than Emerson quotes or paraphrases Hindu philosophy.

While there is little or no direct evidence that Bellamy read translations of Hindu writings (how much better we might know if his library were extant), various excellent translations were available at the time, and it would not be surprising if his omnivorous curiosity had led him to them. In some respects he went much further than Emerson or Thoreau in that direction.

Another interesting sidelight on Bellamy's acquaintance with the wisdom of India is provided by the Theosophists. Emerson, the "Yankee Philosopher," and Thoreau, Alcott, and Bellamy all gave America concepts which have the flavor of Asia and were eagerly received because they came in the guise of pure, one hundred per cent Americanism, dressed in the American language. The Theosophical movement, on the contrary, endeavored to present Indian philosophy consciously and openly. Critics of Theosophy might charge that its early use of Hindu terminology was ostentatious, with affectation of mystery. Some critics of Theosophy seem

[9] Unpublished papers (B2–Plots 2–p. 4). Carlyle expressed the same thought: "Time and space are not God, but creations of God; with God as it is a universal 'here,' so is it an everlasting 'now.'" [Carlyle, Thomas, *Sartor Resartus,* Book Second, Chapter VIII.] Bellamy may have found this idea in Carlyle, or in Emerson, who wrote in "The Over-Soul," "Time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul. A man is capable of abolishing them both."

to take the position that the great literature and great philosophy of India, already available to scholars, had been introduced almost accidentally to the rank and file of the western world by means of a naturally gifted person, Madame Blavatsky, who had, however, marked limitations of personality.

From the very beginning Theosophists took Edward Bellamy to be a man after their own kind. In the American Theosophical magazine, *The Path,* for October, 1887, a few months before *Looking Backward* appeared, mention was made of Bellamy's story, "The Blindman's World," as an illustration of ". . . the way in which . . . writers' minds often appear to be unconsciously influenced by the thoughts in this [Theosophist] direction that are 'in the air.' " [10] In the same magazine for January, 1888, the month *Looking Backward* was published, there was mention of Bellamy's story, "At Pinney's Ranch," with the comment: "The author has a partiality for occult subjects, and he uses his materials well. The final words in this story read like a satire on some of our psychical research friends." [11]

A year after *Looking Backward* appeared *The Path* published a long review of Bellamy's fanciful story, "To Whom This May Come," in which he speculated on changes in human character which would take place if people should completely understand each other's thoughts and purposes. Because this review gives us a view of Bellamy's mind in this field, as well as indicates the attitude of the Theosophists toward him, the gist of it is reproduced:

> It is not long since it was said that the stories had all been told. . . . The new realm for imaginative creation to be opened up to literary activity by Occultism, was then scarcely suspected. . . . There are two ways in which authors appear to cultivate this ground. One is that of the average constructor of stories, who simply regards Occultism as an interesting mine for intellectual exploitation, and, without any true comprehension, merely seizes upon the external aspects of the subject, and arbitrarily invents all sorts of phenomenal occurrences, usually out of all accord with psychic or occult laws.
>
> The second way is that of those writers who have the organization of the true poet; the faculty to look upon that which is invisible . . . So unerringly does what they say tally with the subtler meanings, that it seems as if no writer who "reads up" on the subject merely for the sake

[10] "Theosophical Aspects of Contemporary Literature," *The Path,* Vol. II (October, 1887).

[11] "Theosophical Aspects of Contemporary Thought and Literature," *The Path,* Vol. II (January, 1888).

of intellectual diversion, and to obtain some novel material with which to please his readers, could thus achieve truth to occult facts.

. . . Harper's for February of this year gives a remarkable story of this character. It is called "To Whom This May Come," by Edward Bellamy, the strikingly theosophical nature of whose stories has several times been alluded to in THE PATH. The present story surpasses its predecessors in this respect, and is characterized by thought high and noble in its spirituality. . . . Mr. Bellamy has a remarkable faculty—which is that of the scientific thinker in the highest sense; the man who beholds things in the light of imagination held in control by law—of supposing a certain condition of existence, either physical, psychical or spiritual, and then depicting life as it must necessarily be under such conditions. This he does with rare consistency and power of verisimilitude.

It will be perceived that one of the chief attributes of perfected human brotherhood must be the faculty of sharing the thoughts of others as if they were our own. Therein lies that extension of the individuality which makes all men one with each other, which makes our brother really ourself. . . . In this tale, Mr. Bellamy has simply allegorized a great truth.

Here is a fine picture of the feeling of one who first comes among such a race: "I imagine that the very unpleasant sensations which followed the realization that I was among people who, while inscrutable to me, knew my every thought, was very much what anyone would have experienced in the same case. They were very comparable to the panic which accidental nudity causes a person among races whose custom it is to conceal the figure with drapery. I wanted to run away and hide myself. If I analyzed my feeling, it did not seem to arise so much from the consciousness of any particularly heinous secrets as from the knowledge of a swarm of fatuous, ill-natured, and unseemly thoughts and half-thoughts concerning those around me and concerning myself, which it was insufferable that any person should peruse in however benevolent a spirit. But while my chagrin and distress on this account were at first intense, they were also short-lived, for almost immediately I discovered that the very knowledge that my mind was overlooked by others, operated to check thoughts that might be painful to them, and that, too, without more effort of the will than a kindly person exerts to check the utterance of disagreeable remarks."

And here the consequence: "How shall I describe the moral health and cleanness, the breezy oxygenated mental condition, which resulted

from the consciousness that I had absolutely nothing concealed! Truly I may say that I enjoyed myself. I think surely that no one needs to have had any marvellous experience to sympathize with this portion of it. Are we not all ready to agree that this having a curtained chamber where we may go to grovel, out of sight of our fellows, troubled only by a vague apprehension that God may look over the top, is the most demoralizing incident in the human condition?"

". . . think what health and soundness there must be for souls among a people who see in every face a conscience which, unlike their own, they cannot sophisticate, who confess one another with a glance, and shrive with a smile! Ah friends, let me now predict, though ages may elapse before the slow event shall justify me, that in no way will the mutual vision of minds, when at last it shall be perfected, so enhance the blessedness of mankind as by rending the veil of self, and leaving no spot of darkness for lies to hide in. Then shall the soul no longer be a coal smoking among ashes, but a star set in a crystal sphere."

It is to be remarked that in the foregoing there is in the literary style a notable similarity to that of the writer of "Light on the Path." There is the same exquisite imagery, the same beauteous, graceful garb befitting lofty thought, and it seems as if behind them both there might be the same guiding Master hand, even if to the writer unknown.

Here is another glorious passage: "Self-knowledge means to the mind-reader [as described in the fanciful story] . . . nothing less, indeed, than a shifting of the identity. When a man sees himself in a mirror, he is compelled to distinguish between the bodily self he sees, and his real self, the mental and moral self, which is within and unseen. When in turn the mind-reader comes to see the mental and moral self reflected in other minds as in mirrors, the same thing happens. He is compelled to distinguish between this mental and moral self which has been made objective to him, and can be contemplated by him as impartially as if it were another's, from the inner ego, which still remains subjective, unseen, and indefinable. In this inner ego the mind-readers recognize the essential identity and being, the noumenal self, the core of the soul, and the true hiding of its eternal life, to which the mind as well as the body is but the garment of a day."

. . . We shall surely be privileged to hear more from the mind that has given us this noble story, and the message intended by it.[12]

[12] "Theosophical Aspects of Contemporary Thought and Literature," *The Path,* March, 1889.

In the issue of *The Path* for March, 1889, is a review of *Looking Backward,* an extract from which indicates that the Theosophists were inclined to look at Edward Bellamy as one of themselves:

> The significance of the following passage will surely not be lost to Theosophists: "The enfranchisement of humanity in the last century, from mental and physical absorption in working and scheming for the mere bodily necessities, may be regarded as a species of second birth of the race, without which its first birth to an existence that was but a burden would forever have remained unjustified, but whereby it is now abundantly vindicated. Since then humanity has entered on a new phase of spiritual development, an evolution of higher faculties, the very existence of which in human nature our ancestors scarcely expected."
>
> A passage like the foregoing, as well as the whole noble tone of the work, stamps Mr. Bellamy as a natural Theosophist.[13]

In 1940 the writer published "The Religion of Solidarity," unabridged and unedited. The following comment on that booklet was written by Professor Charles J. Ryan of the Theosophical University at Point Loma, California:

> I have just read an astonishing little book by Edward Bellamy written in 1874 . . . on pages 24 to 28 he gives one of the finest presentations in a comparatively few words of the highest Theosophical ideal and practice of impersonality I have seen. On page 32 of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* the Master K. H. outlines the meaning of personal love and the higher aspect in which it blends with or into the universal: also see page 212. Well, Bellamy gives this in the most beautiful form in this little forty-page booklet which he wrote eight years before the first letters in *The Mahatma Letters* were written, and more than fifty years before they were made public!

In 1939 a European admirer of *Looking Backward* wrote to inquire whether Bellamy was a Theosophist. He stated that *Looking Backward* gave internal evidence of acquaintance with its principles and its terms. There is no record that Edward Bellamy was a member of the Theosophical Society, although his brother Charles was recorded as a member.

Edward Bellamy may have arrived at his philosophy substantially without outside influence; he may have had direct access to translations of

[13] " 'Nationalism'—A Sign of the Times," *The Path,* March, 1889.

Hindu writings, perhaps in New York; he doubtless was influenced by Emerson and Thoreau; he may have read some of the early Theosophical literature, though much of his philosophic writing preceded the organization of the Theosophical Society and the writings of its founder. He may have met with other writings on the subject in America or Europe.

An echo may select, but it cannot create. In Bellamy's expression there is creation, and an integration of India, Judea, Greece, Europe, and America. Analogies of modern science are incorporated into the general concepts. The relation of Bellamy to his sources is somewhat like the relation of Mendelssohn to his teachers, whose career would have been impossible without teachers, though the music he made was his own. The result is that to a degree we have something new. To whatever extent Bellamy was indebted to the ancient East, the manner of that indebtedness may be described by Christy's comment on Emerson: "That there is an Oriental reflection in his work is proof only of the fact that he had seen himself in Oriental literature, projected himself into it, used it as an illustration of his own theory of how to treat books and history, and from the foreign store, borrowed forms of expression." [14]

[14] Christy, Arthur, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism, op. cit.,* p. 183.

III. EDWARD BELLAMY AND NEMESIS

In spite of virtue and the muse,
Nemesis will have her dues,
And all our struggles and our toils
Tighter wind the giant coils.
—Emerson

LONG before he endeavored in *Looking Backward* to point a way of escape from economic servitude, Edward Bellamy had been preparing himself to work for relief from an incubus of the human spirit which perhaps has been no less persistent and deadly—the excessive and unnecessary dread and fear which man has created by false beliefs concerning the power of his past to mar his future.

Growing up in New England Calvinism, in which the doctrine of original sin and total depravity was much emphasized, he became keenly aware of the sense of impending retribution which through the ages has so weighed upon men's spirits. In *Looking Backward* he wrote, "I was brought up a Calvinist, and ought not to be startled to hear crime spoken of as an ancestral trait." [1] As he freed himself from that dread pall, he realized that what he had been striving against was not just a point of religious doctrine, or a New England trait, but one of the chief sources of human tragedy. He came to have a deep interest in the cause and nature of what Shakespeare called the "clogging burden of a guilty soul," and undertook to point the way by which the freedom which he had achieved might be the common lot of men.

An observing and reflective young man in a New England village, he saw his brothers becoming aggressive, successful lawyers, his neighbors preoccupied with making textiles and munitions, and with the chatter and clatter and grind of what they called society. Nearly everyone seemed reasonably well satisfied with what he was, or with what he would be when he had gained his economic or social ends. Yet as the young man in the intervals of writing editorials and book reviews watched his neighbors closely, he saw that nearly everyone moved about in the shadow of his own personal cloud—not a shining aura or halo which lighted up his own

[1] Bellamy, Edward, *Looking Backward 2000–1887* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926), p. 200.

soul, with glory and light to spare which would help make the whole world luminous, but on the contrary a dark presence which dulled the light of sun and stars with areas of dread and gloom. He came to believe that the foreboding and frustration of hope which all this busyness and skillful smiling failed to disguise was not due to the lack of light in the heavens, but to these clouds which men somehow had created and which they perpetuated and protected in the very process of living their own lives.

He wondered at this strange phenomenon of men making darkness for themselves when they loved the light. He sought to understand its cause and nature.

What had baffled and perhaps had defeated the heroic spirit of the Greek and had persistently shadowed the Jew through the centuries; what the Hebrew prophetic tradition and Christianity had met with insight and spiritual genius, but had not overcome; what had marred, dampened, and bewildered the spirits of men in all lands and ages—it was nothing less than that dread spectre which young Bellamy attacked.

Limited in physical resources, with a body unable to sustain the vital, driving impulse of his spirit, always on the verge of over-reaching his strength and bringing his life to an end, nevertheless he wrestled with this great issue. Without claiming for himself unusual powers he looked at it as a virile, intelligent, unspoiled boy might do whose thought was not yet blurred, stained and distorted by the inherited murk of hate and dread. And with that courageous look he got a glimpse of simple truth, so simple that it did not need profound philosophy or abstruse psychology to express it.

In rebelling against unnecessary servitude of the human spirit to an imperfect past Bellamy became convinced that to whatever extent it is possible, without illusion and within the bounds of reality, to lift from men's spirits this shadow of nemesis would be a significant contribution to the worth of living. Through years of thinking on this issue as disclosed by many entries in his notebooks, he approached it from various directions, stating and restating it to himself. He used the subject matter of biology and psychology (though not technically trained in either field) as well as uninhibited common sense, to throw light on the problem.

Having found what seemed to him to be a significant truth, Bellamy's limitation was what would be called his sanity. He did not have the assurance of the inspired prophet or of the fanatic who trusts himself against all the world. He lacked the unqualified confidence of a Christ, a Mohammed,

a Nietzsche, a Führer, and of a myriad smaller men in business, art, and government who have no doubt but that of all men they most surely see reality or truth. Rather he looked upon himself as having come upon an interesting hypothesis, a theory which appeared reasonable. This hypothesis he examined, tested, explored. Then tentatively, cautiously, and with apparent misgiving, in his early books and short stories he began to present his findings to the world and to watch for the reaction.

His mind played about his idea as though he were not yet fully master of it. One suspects that in some of his short stories, such as "The Old Folks' Party" and "Lost," he gave it almost casual expression because at first he did not have the clarity of concept to speak as one having authority. To treat with seeming casualness ideas which one has not the assurance or the courage to sponsor openly is an old device in literature.

When Sophocles undertook to challenge the deep-seated Greek doctrine of nemesis with the words:

> What should man do with fear, who hath but Chance
> Above him, and no sight nor governance
> Of things to be? To live as life may run,
> No fear, no fret, were wisest 'neath the sun [2]

he avoided the charge of heresy by making this defiance of Greek conviction as an exclamation of the queen, Jacosta, who thereafter in his tragedy is discredited by being pursued and brought to destruction by the very fate she dared to question. As a protection to his reputation for sanity a man may hide his concern over his most earnest thoughts by giving them the appearance of irresponsible expression. "I do not commit myself to this idea," he says in effect; "if you like it, that is your affair." Yet he secretly hopes that it will not be found lacking in significance.

Sometimes a man takes that casual attitude even toward himself in order to assure himself that he is not a fanatic. But the people crave a Messiah, a Führer, an absolute authority—a substitute for the all-wise parent of infancy from whom they have not been spiritually weaned. Unless a man believes in himself, why should others believe in him? So Bellamy, by not confessing the intense earnestness which his notebooks and manuscripts disclose and by expressing his ideas almost incidentally in fiction, did not gain for them the hearing they deserved.

[2] Sophocles, *Oedipus, King of Thebes,* Gilbert Murray, trans. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 55–56.

THE SENSE OF IMPENDING EVIL

What is the nature of this dread feeling of fate, of nemesis, of guilt? In many times and places the sense of impending evil has taken numberless forms. Descriptions of folkways the world over, as in Frazer's *Golden Bough,* indicate how widespread and varied may be its manifestations. With the classic Greeks the sense of inescapable retribution cast a deep and tragic shadow over life. Gilbert Murray in his preface to the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus speaks of ". . . the old and everlastingly unsolved problem of 'The ancient blinded vengeance and the wrong that amendeth wrong.'" He continues:

> Every wrong is justly punished; yet, as the world goes, every punishment becomes a new wrong, calling for fresh vengeance. And more; every wrong turns out to be itself rooted in some wrong of old. It is never gratuitous, never untempted by the working of Peitho (Persuasion), never merely wicked. The *Oresteia* [of which the *Agamemnon* is the first part] first shows the cycle of crime punished by crime which must be repunished, and then seeks for some gleam of escape, some breaking of the endless chain of "evil duty." In the old order of earth and heaven there was no such escape. Each blow called for the return blow and must do so *ad infinitum.*[3]

The Greek tragedy of *Oedipus* by Sophocles is typical. With complete innocence of intent, and with no knowledge of their relationship on the part of either, Oedipus was wedded to a woman whom he later found to be his mother. For this unintentional offense against the gods there was no forgiveness, no atonement. A relentless fate pursued them to destruction, a fate foretold by an oracle. As Sophocles makes Oedipus say:

> If one should dream that such a world began
> In some slow devil's heart, that hated man,
> Who should deny him?[4]

The Greek was so steeped in this conviction of nemesis that he could not see that "such a world" which sometimes demanded action which was capricious, hateful, and arbitrary, was not in the nature of things, but was

[3] Aeschylus, The *Agamemnon,* trans. Gilbert Murray (New York: Oxford Press, 1920), pp. viii–ix. Steffansson records an almost identical folk belief among the Eskimos of the far north, who in many respects had an ideal social economy.

[4] Sophocles, *Oedipus, King of Thebes, op. cit.,* p. 47.

a creation of his own mind. Had Edward Bellamy come to the Greek civilization of 300 or 400 B. C. with his concept of man's spirit constantly renewed and freed from the tyranny of the past, and had he survived execution for heresy, he might have been among the significant figures of Greek history, for servitude to the idea of nemesis was one of the most oppressive and limiting concepts of that civilization.

With the Hebrews this servitude to the mistakes or sins of the past took the form of an exaggerated sense of guilt, and conviction of the need for expiation, which may be traced through nearly three thousand years, from the earliest prophets to the present. Karl Menninger, in reviewing Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* has summed up the case: "He [Freud] points out that the Jews are a people burdened with a tremendous sense of guilt which drives them constantly on the one hand to make atonements and propitiations to God and to their consciences. . . . What is psychologically important is that Christians and Jews react to guilt feelings, and react to them in ways which are superficially different but actually, in the last analysis, the same—by denial, by atonement, by ritualistic sacrifice. . . . For what the Jews did and what the Jews do are what all people do. . . . So in this Jewish group pattern one can see certain world patterns." [5]

A way for breaking the Jewish servitude was provided by the Christian concept, "Ye must be born again," "Unless ye become as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven," "Resist not evil," "Forgive your enemies." This way of life, which flowered in Christianity, had its roots in the Hebrew prophets. Christianity in some respects was an outgrowth of a schism in the Jewish tradition, in which the prophetic element, which saw man and his opportunities as constantly being renewed, broke off from the priestly line, which saw him as pursued by a relentless nemesis. A characteristic earlier rebellion was that of Jeremiah when he said: "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." [6]

Orthodox Christianity, failing to live up to the spirit in which it was born, retained much of the element of the Greek nemesis and the Hebrew sense of guilt, and looked upon the sense of guilt and the doctrine of total depravity as fundamental. The rebellion of Protestantism did not escape from this dire inheritance. In Calvinism the doctrine of universal guilt

[5] Menninger, Karl, "Death of a Prophet," *The New Republic,* (August 9, 1939), 24.
[6] Jeremiah, xxxi, 29–30.

and of impending retribution was strongly emphasized. From the innumerable references which might be quoted let us select a few from Edward Bellamy's famous forebear, the Reverend Joseph Bellamy, because his works were in the family library and doubtless were read by Edward during that period after his "conversion" when, he tells us, he cared for nothing that did not bear upon the religious life:

> Right apprehension of the moral law [Joseph Bellamy wrote] will, at once, convince us of our inherent natural corruption, and make us feel that we are fallen creatures. . . . If left wholly to themselves, unrestrained, no wickedness would be too bad for them. . . . The whole human race [would] be like so many incarnate devils; they having the seed of all sin in their hearts.
>
> As for us, we lay in the open field of perdition, polluted, perishing in our blood and guilt; and it was perfectly right that the righteous sentence of the law should be executed upon us: and God had been forever glorious in the everlasting ruin of a rebellious world.[7]

The orthodox Christian would have much sympathy for the ancient Greek, Oedipus, who felt himself to be

> one whose hand
> To sin was dedicate, whom God hath shown
> Birth-branded [8]

Just as the Greeks puzzled over the question of why the evil necessity for retaliation should exist in the nature of things, not realizing that the exaggerated feeling of necessity was a creation of man's own mind, so good Calvinists who felt compelled to preach damnation were puzzled over its necessity. "No doubt there was something," Joseph Bellamy wrote, "and something of very great importance, that influenced the infinitely wise and good Governor of the world to such a conduct. . . . Was it for his own good, or his creatures' good? Not for his own good, for he is self-sufficient and independent: not for his creatures' good; for it had been better for them, their interest simply considered, to have had eternal life and blessedness given absolutely and unconditionally." Joseph Bellamy concluded that there must have been something in "the moral fitness of things" that

[7] *The Works of the Rev. Joseph Bellamy, D.D.*, 3 vols. (New York, Stephen Dodge, 1811), I, 313, 317, 330.

[8] Sophocles, *Oedipus, King of Thebes, op. cit.*, p. 80.

obliged God to take that course. He arrived very close to the Greek idea of nemesis.[9]

To the Greek the avenging fate was relentless; there was no way out. To the Christian, the death of Christ provided such a way. To quote Edward Bellamy's famous ancestor again: ". . . what Christ has done and suffered, was sufficient to open a way for the honorable exercise of his sovereign grace, in recovering sinners to himself. . . . And for this, among other reasons, Christ is called the Saviour of the world." [10]

The Calvinist supposedly had relief in the climax of conversion; the Catholic in the more moderate and often-repeated process of confession. In many cases throughout the history of Christianity, removal of the sense of guilt actually did take place and numberless lives of beauty and power have resulted. In passing judgment on the Christian doctrine of guilt we may well emphasize, not the sense of inevitable retribution which Christianity inherited from the world in which it originated, but rather the breach it made in that appalling doctrine by adding emphasis to the element of atonement and forgiveness.[11]

According to the Calvinist theology, this tremendous build-up of a sense of guilt would all be removed in the process of conversion. It is not difficult to understand the great ecstasy of relief which frequently accompanied that experience, which Bellamy more than once described. But the job of impressing men with a sense of guilt could be too well done. The whole temper of Christianity has been warped by it.

While the years have greatly lightened the burden which lay upon the spirit of the New England Calvinist, the sense of guilt and of nemesis against which Bellamy rebelled had become more than a creed; it was an atmosphere in which he lived, difficult to define, but nevertheless potent. It has survived the decay of creeds. It is not only those who hold to extreme religious doctrines who suffer from this cause. A large part of humanity, including many men who are not aware of any restraining creed or philosophy, bear undue burdens of remorse, regret, despair, or discouragement—a feeling of the hopeless burden of past errors which seem to destroy possibility of realizing the potentialities of their lives.

[9] *The Works of the Rev. Joseph Bellamy, D.D., op. cit.*, pp. 359, 360.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

[11] Not that the idea of atonement or forgiveness was peculiar to Christianity. The harsh doctrines of nemesis compelled search for ways of escape. Frazer gives numerous instances of such in *The Golden Bough*. For instance: "The Biajas of Borneo annually send to sea a little bark laden with the sins and misfortunes of the people."

THE ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF NEMESIS

How can we account for this widespread blight on the human spirit—this dread that runs far beyond the necessity of the nature of things. The true explanation probably is one which furnishes a key to many grievous and unnecessary impediments which man has created for himself. Such burdens often are results of unskillful and mistaken exercise of one of man's highest powers. Among the chief ways in which he differs from his nearest animal relatives is in his capacity and in his uncontrollable urge to generalize, to observe particular facts and then to discover the general laws or principles of which those facts are individual cases. Without such ability there could be no civilization.

Yet men are not born with sure power to make accurate generalizations. Such capacity grows slowly and uncertainly as wisdom grows, and mistaken efforts to generalize from everyday experience to universal laws have caused a large part of human tragedy. With the Hindu the sense of pity and of sympathy has been generalized into the principle that all life is sacred, until vermin and venomous snakes are protected. The impulse of a man to revenge a wrong, in the case of the Greeks and of other peoples, led to the generalization that he must forever do so whether he would or no. The sex impulse has been generalized and ceremonialized in a thousand ways. The fact that it needed control has led to the over-generalization which has promoted celibacy and monasticism. The fact that personal restraint and self-control are necessary has led to extreme generalization in doctrines of asceticism, renunciation, even of self-torture, that are grotesque and extreme. Such beliefs and cults may endure for many centuries.

It is as an exaggerated or mistaken generalization from experience that we must explain the Greek nemesis, the Hebrew sense of guilt, the Christian doctrine of total depravity, and numberless other excessive servitudes to past error. It is biologically and socially necessary that when a person has taken a mistaken course he shall not quickly forget having done so. Remembrance of past error helps to his survival and to his social usefulness. Thus arises wholesome regret for error. Then the desire to understand and to generalize takes hold of this feeling and erects it into a philosophy or a theology, sometimes with great exaggeration or distortion. Where the generalizations have been accurate and wise they form the very foundation of society, in manners, morals, ethics, and laws. Where they have been inaccurate or exaggerated they have resulted in bad laws, false morals,

superstitions, taboos, oppressions, and in countless unnecessary fears and dreads. In all ages and among all races men have fluctuated between too little concern for the results of their actions, and distorted dread of the consequences of wrong or mistaken conduct. Accurate judgment and a sense of proportion are not easily achieved.

HOW BELLAMY CHALLENGED NEMESIS

We can trace the beginnings of Bellamy's thinking on this theme in his notebooks. At the age of twenty-four he wrote:

> One person can follow a course generally regarded as evil and yet remain uninjured as regards the integrity of his moral nature, while another person is ruined and morally degenerated by following the same course. The reason is that the first man does not recognize anything evil in that course, while the latter does. Accordingly, when the former indulges in it he does not rack and debilitate his will, and does not lose his self-respect, while the other does. It is the house divided against itself that falls. Given two men following the same evil course, the man without conscience does not injure himself save as regards the immediate effects of his course, while the man with a tender conscience is ruined beyond hope of regeneration. His whole moral nature becomes tainted. A tender conscience has ruined far more men and women than it has ever saved. When one has fairly taken to a course opposed to current opinions, the less conscience he has, the more hope for him. More men might be saved by persuading them that their crimes were justifiable, than by persuading them that they are censurable. A man who does not regard himself as a sinner does not feel the worst effects of his sin—namely, the general loss of integrity in his moral nature.[12]

It follows, as Bellamy has implied elsewhere in his writings, that a conventional or arbitrary system of ethics or morals which results in men having a sense of guilt for action which is not inherently harmful may result in unnecessary and destructive stresses of personality. When a person feels guilty over doing something which is necessary, useful, and perhaps inevitable, or when lapses due to the frailties of human character seem irretrievable and unpardonable, he is apt to become "disillusioned," cynical, and pessimistic over the possibility of ethical living.

[12] Unpublished papers (B1–2–26, 27). Was not such an expression a forerunner of psychoanalysis?

The philosophy which was developing in Edward Bellamy's mind concerning the nature of ethical obligations, and the possibility of freeing life from the exaggerated shadow of the past, while it never was given organized and adequate expression, can be gathered from various fragments of his writings.

There are four steps in the process which he follows in dealing with this issue. First, he makes us clearly aware of the problem itself. Memory, in tying the past to the present, may carry over from the dead past its burden of guilt and shame, and may attach it to the present life which, if freed from that burden, might be good. In the book, *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process,* one of his first public expressions of his interest, we have a picture of an excessive sense of guilt, which he feels is a needless and unnatural burden. In the simple words of a drug clerk in a village like his native Chicopee Falls he gives us a picture of a tragedy of the ages. The first chapter of the book is a description of a village prayer meeting, very much like those he had attended so often in his father's church. The meeting was about to close when a young man rose to speak:

> It was George Bayley, a young man of good education, excellent training, and once of great promise, but of most unfortunate recent experience. About a year previous he had embezzled a small amount of the funds of a corporation in Newville, of which he was paymaster, for the purpose of raising money for a pressing emergency. Various circumstances showed that his repentance had been poignant, even before his theft was discovered. He had reimbursed the corporation, and there was no prosecution, because his dishonest act had been no part of generally vicious habits, but a single unaccountable deflection from rectitude. The evident intensity of his remorse had excited general sympathy, and, when Parker, the village druggist, gave him employment as clerk, the act was generally applauded, and all the village folk had endeavored with one accord, by a friendly and hearty manner, to make him feel that they were disposed to forget the past and help him to begin life over again. . . . He had the look of one whom, after a wasting illness, the fever has finally left; of one who has struggled hard, but whose struggle is over. And his voice, when he began to speak, was very soft and clear.
>
> "You remember, perhaps, that I professed to be converted last winter. Since then I am aware that I have shown a lack of interest in religious matters, which has certainly justified you in supposing that I was either hasty or insincere in my profession. . . . Hasty I may have been, but not insincere. . . .

". . . I remember when I was a little boy in school, and one day made a big blot on the very first page of my new copy-book, that I didn't have the heart to go on any further, and I recollect well how I teased my father to buy me a new book . . . until he finally took his knife and neatly cut out the blotted page. Then I was comforted and took heart. . . .

"Now you see, don't you . . . how it was that after my disgrace I couldn't seem to take an interest any more in anything? Then came the revival, and that gave me a notion that religion might help me. I had heard, from a child, that the blood of Christ had a power to wash away sins and to leave one white and spotless with a sense of being new and clean every whit. That was what I wanted, just what I wanted. I am sure that you never had a more sincere, more dead-in-earnest convert than I was."

". . . I found that these bright promises were only figurative expressions which I had taken literally. . . . Forgiving sins, I should have known, is not blotting them out. The blood of Christ only turns them red instead of black. It leaves them in the record. It leaves them on the memory. . . . It wasn't any penalty from without, but the hurt to my own pride which the spot made, that I wanted taken away, so I might get heart to go on. Supposing one of you . . . had picked a pocket. Would it make a great deal of difference in your state of mind that the person whose pocket you had picked kindly forgave you and declined to prosecute? Your offense against him was trifling and easily repaired. Your chief offense was against yourself, and that was irreparable."

"The ancients had a beautiful fable about the water of Lethe, in which the soul that was bathed straightway forgot all that was sad and evil in its previous life; the most stained, disgraced, and mournful of souls coming forth fresh, blithe, and bright as a baby's. I suppose my absurd misunderstanding arose from a vague notion that the blood of Christ had in it something like this virtue of Lethe water. Just think how blessed a thing for men it would be if such were indeed the case, if their memories could be cleansed and disinfected at the same time their hearts were purified! Then the most disgraced and ashamed might live good and happy lives again. Men would be redeemed from their sins in fact, and not merely in name. The figurative promises of the Gospel would become literally true. But this is idle dreaming. I will not keep you," and, checking himself abruptly, he sat down.[13]

[13] Bellamy, Edward, *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1880), pp. 6–12.

That night George Bayley took his own life.

This testimony is a sort of prologue to the book, and states the problem with which it deals. The chief character, Madeline Brand, is a popular, self-reliant, vivacious young woman who after a lapse from the moral code falls into remorse and depression, and disappears. Henry Burr, a sincere, competent, matter-of-fact person whom she had jilted to take up with a romantic, fly-by-night lover, finds her in Boston in desperate mental condition. The story recounts his efforts to help her forget the past and to begin life new.

Repeatedly Bellamy states the issue of this unnecessary burden under which men live. He has a character say:

> The same class of people will maintain that it's wrong to cure the moral pain which results from a bad act who used to think it wrong to cure the physical diseases induced by vicious indulgence. . . . The morality of the two kinds of cures is precisely the same. . . . The whole working of moral retribution, on the contrary, is to torture the sensitive souled, who would never do much harm anyway, while the really hard cases of society, by their very hardness, avoid all suffering. . . . The deeper the repentance, the more intense the longing and love for better things, the more poignant the pang of regret and the sense of irreparable loss. There is no sense, no end, no use, in this law which increases the severity of the punishment as the victim grows in innocency.
>
> . . . it is the memory of our past sins which demoralizes us, by imparting a sense of weakness and causing loss of self-respect. . . . Acts merely express the character. The recollection of those acts is what impresses the character, and gives it a tendency in a particular direction.[14]

Bellamy's next step is to picture, with the touch of a master of writing, the difference it would make to life if this incubus could be removed. Madeline in her shame had hidden herself in the city, and then:

> One morning a bitter thing happened to her. She had slept unusually well, and her dreams had been sweet and serene, untinged by any shadow of her waking thoughts, as if, indeed, the visions intended for the sleeping brain of some fortunate woman had by mistake strayed into hers. For a while she had lain, half dozing, half awake, pleasantly conscious of the soft, warm bed, and only half emerged from the atmosphere of dreamland. As at last she opened her eyes, the newly risen sun, bright

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 115–117, 119.

from his ocean bath, was shining into the room, and the birds were singing. A lilac bush before the window was moving in the breeze, and the shadows of its twigs were netting the sunbeams on the wall as they danced to and fro.

The spirit of the jocund morn quite carried her away, and all unthinkingly she bounded out into the room and stood there with a smile of sheer delight upon her face. She had forgotten all about her shame and sorrow. For an instant they were as completely gone from her mind as if they had never been, and for that instant nowhere did the sun's far-reaching eye rest on a blither or more innocent face. Then memory laid its icy finger on her heart and stilled its bounding pulse. The glad smile went out, like a taper quenched in Acheron, and she fell prone upon the floor, crying with hard, dry sobs, "O God! O God! O God!"

That day, and for many days afterward, she thought again and again of that single happy instant ere memory reclaimed its victim. It was the first for so long a time, and it was so very sweet, like a drop of water to one in torment. What a heaven a life must be which had many such moments! Was it possible that once, long ago, her life had been such an one—that she could awake mornings and not be afraid of remembering? Had there ever been a time when the ravens of shame and remorse had not perched above her bed as she slept, waiting her waking to plunge their beaks afresh into her heart? That instant of happiness which had been given her, how full it had been of blithe thanks to God and sympathy with the beautiful life of the world! Surely it showed that she was not bad that she could have such a moment. It showed her heart was pure; it was only her memory that was foul. It was in vain that she swept and washed all within, and was good, when all the while her memory, like a ditch from a distant morass, emptied its vile stream of recollections into her heart, poisoning all the issues of life.

Years before, in one of the periodical religious revivals at Newville, she had passed through the usual girlish experience of conversion. Now, indeed, was a time when the heavenly compensations to which religion invites the thoughts of the sorrowful might surely have been a source of some relief. But a certain cruel clearness of vision, or so at least it seemed to her, made all reflections on this theme but an aggravation of her despair. Since the shadow had fallen on her life, with every day the sense of shame and grief had grown more insupportable. In proportion as her loathing of the sin had grown, her anguish on account of it had in-

creased. It was a poison-tree which her tears watered and caused to shoot forth yet deeper roots, yet wider branches, overspreading her life with ever denser, more noxious shadows. Since, then, on earth the purification of repentance does but deepen the soul's anguish over the past, how should it be otherwise in heaven, all through eternity? The pure in heart that see God, thought the unhappy girl, must only be those that have always been so, for such as become pure by repentance and tears do but see their impurity plainer every day.

Her horror of such a heaven, where through eternity perfect purification should keep her shame undying, taught her unbelief, and turned her for comfort to that other deep instinct of humanity, which sees in death the promise of eternal sleep, rest, and oblivion.[15]

Henry Burr, her faithful lover, tried to help Madeline recover her spirits. On one of his visits to her:

He presented himself, after tea, at Madeline's lodgings, and she opened the door to him. . . . There was a flush of excitement on either cheek, and her eyes were bright and unsteady. In one hand she held, with a clasp that crumpled the leaves, a small scientific magazine, which he recognized as having been one of a bundle of periodicals that he had sent her. With her other hand, instead of taking the hand which he extended, she clutched his arm and almost pulled him inside the door.

"Henry, do you remember what George Bayley said that night in meeting, about the river of Lethe, in which souls were bathed and forgot the past?"

"I remember something about it," he answered.

"There is such a river. It was not a fable. It has been found again," she cried. . . . "Henry, see here, I want to ask you something. Supposing anybody had done something bad and had been very sorry for it, and then had forgotten it all, forgotten it wholly, would you think that made them good again? Would it seem so to you? Tell me?"

"Yes, surely; but it isn't necessary they should forget, so long as they're sorry."

"But supposing they had forgotten, too?"

"Yes, surely, it would be as if it had never been.". . .

"Here, take it. Go somewhere and read it."

[15] *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*, pp. 85–87.

She thrust the magazine into his hand, and almost pushed him out of the door. But he went no farther than the hall. . . . Then it occurred to him to look at the magazine. He opened it by the light of the hall lamp, and his eyes fell on these words, the title of an article: "The Extirpation of Thought Processes. A New Invention." [16]

Then follows the discussion of Dr. Heidenhoff's process. The old doctor says, "Macbeth's question, 'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased; pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow; raze out the written troubles of the brain?' was a puzzle to the sixteenth-century doctor, but he of the twentieth, yes, perhaps of the nineteenth, will be able to answer it affirmatively." [17] For a moment in the story we seem to have a cure, and a renewal of fresh young life, but then we learn that the doctor and his process were only a dream in the distraught mind of Henry Burr. He awakes to receive a letter Madeline had written him just before taking her life.

Eight years after the publication of *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* a reader of the book wrote him a criticism to which Bellamy responded:

Your letter has interested me. I cannot however admit that you are correct in taking exception to Dr. Heidenhoff's theory of memory. You claim that the memory of wrong acts is desirable as a deterrent from the repetition of them, or to put it in a nutshell, that the burnt child dreads the fire because he remembers the burn. Now this is true as to the child and the fire, because that is a simple teaching of experience not complicated with the moral element of shame and self-contempt. When the act has, however, a moral quality, and the memory of it involves the latter emotions, it is not true that this memory tends to deter from its repetition in anything like the degree in which it tends, by impairing the self-respect, to cause its repetition. This I am sure is too obvious to need argument. There are few careers of vice or crime which do not illustrate it. In seeking to reform a criminal it is always the first and hardest job to restore some measure of self-respect to him, that is to say, to counteract the effect of the memory of his own misdeeds. Criminals and depraved persons know better than anybody else how miserable a life of wrongdoing makes those who follow it, yet they keep on in it, which shows clearly enough how slight the effect of shameful and painful memories to deter, compared with their effect to demoralize.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 93–95.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY

The third step in Bellamy's presentation of his philosophy is to outline his idea of the nature of personality. According to this theory, in what we call a human life we really have not one but numerous "lives" which, while they are related to each other somewhat as cause and effect, or as yesterday and today are related, are not identical, and as time passes the responsibility of myself today for the acts of that other self of another day, or of another decade, does not continue undiminished.

Of the many expressions to this effect in his writings there is one fragment, found in a jumble of hand-written manuscripts, which presents the idea in a somewhat organized and consistent form. From the character of the handwriting, and from notebook fragments which are incorporated, it would seem that this fragment, entitled "How Many Men Make a Man?" was written when he was twenty-four or twenty-five. It contains obvious weaknesses and overstatements which he doubtless would have eliminated before presenting any such statement to the public.

The entire position taken is strikingly contrary to that commonly held, though it has elements of similarity to some present-day concepts of the nature of personality. The discussion is an illustration of Bellamy's ability to step aside from the conventional viewpoint and to look at life in a fresh, critical way. As a link in the chain of Bellamy's thinking on the subject of nemesis, the gist of this article is introduced:

> The unit of humanity is commonly considered to be the individual, this being the name given to a complete organism of the genus homo during the entire period of its growth, maturity, and decay, during its seven ages of puling infancy, boisterous childhood, sighing adolescence, ambitious and fiery manhood, staid maturity, the lean and slippered pantaloon of age, and the mere oblivion of second childhood. It is our singular conceit to call these seven so varied and opposite persons one, an individual, a unit forsooth. Certainly this so-called unit has a strangely composite aspect: it seems more like a collective than a personal noun. It tempts us to try another division in our search for the molecule of humanity, the ultimate unit. Obviously a correct idea of this unit or molecule is as essential to any science of human nature, to all psychological and ethical reasoning, as is a true theory of the molecule of matter to the science of chemistry. The present essay is an effort to show that the in-

dividual is capable of disintegration into an indefinite number of non-identical personalities.

The use of the term "personal identity" is in common parlance so loose that in some respects it would be desirable to begin with reducing it to a distinct and logical definition. But this will not be attempted because the object of the present essay is not the construction of a syllogism but the popular presentation of a view of life which depends for support upon appeals to the experience of every man with himself, and not upon the flawlessness of a metaphysical argument; and also because the best effect of reasoning requires that it proceed from a basis of ideas already in the minds of those addressed rather than from an artificial basis of definitions, however correct, to which these minds are not accustomed, and that too although the pre-existing basis be imperfect and indistinct. This course is the one followed by the mind itself in reasoning from old to new conclusions . . .

. . . I will call the personal identity that sense an individual has of the present state and relation of his attributes together with the memory of previous states. In the first place let us see with what truth the memory of previous states can be said to be essential to the sense of personal identity. Is it not a matter of fact that middle-aged persons in general remember nothing whatever of their infancy, scarcely more of their childhood, of their youth but a few episodes, and more or less of the succeeding parts of life according to their distance from them in time? When we reflect that each hour of the past was as teeming with thought, emotion and action as the present hour, the bulk of what we have forgotten bears to the scattered events we recall a proportion almost infinite.

In holding that the memory is not contributory to the sense of personal identity I would by no means seem to ignore its full potency. I know the intense experiences of those hours when we look hazily through eyes dimmed with tears upon the scenes of youth, seeing as in a vision our past selves and wistfully regarding them across the gulf of years. For the moment they seem the real and we the unreal presences . . . And yet it is in these very experiences that we feel most strongly how utterly gone are these past selves, how entirely different are we who now are. . . . They are but occasional excursions—experiences coming athwart our daily life with a sharp sense of contrast.

. . . we find upon examination that the remembrance of past per-

sonalities is in no wise essential to the sense of personal identity. It appears that the sense of personal identity consists solely in a sense of the present personality, this statement being however somewhat modified. For by the present personality I do not mean the personality strictly of the present moment, but would be understood as including with it the still persisting though ever fading consciousness of such parts of immediately preceding personalities as are most obviously and directly linked with the present in trains of mental or physical sequence. It seems to be a law of the perpetually changing personality that one state shall pass into another gradually and not abruptly. The sole office by which the memory apparently contributes to maintain the personal identity is by securing their graduation. . . . The personal identities or personalities die then gradually but as utterly as if broken off abruptly. In the optical exhibition called dissolving views the successive pictures fade into each other not the less completely that they do it insensibly.

It appears then that the idea of personal identity does not conflict with the theory of non-identical personalities, for personal identity does not imply even the memory of past personalities, much less identity of consciousness with them.

Consider how entirely the different epochs of life, the different personalities fail to comprehend each other. To childhood adult life seems an utterly joyless, stiff existence, a dull and dreary monotony. Children look upon adults as persons belonging to another world with which they have no concern. . . . It is almost if not quite as difficult for a grown person to appreciate child life as for children to appreciate mature life. A mature person remembers but brief passages of his childhood: it is no longer a part of his consciousness. . .

To put oneself in another's place is hard enough among contemporaries, but as between our earlier and later selves appears to be pretty much out of the question. A man may by good luck get himself understood by other men, a youth by other youth, a child by other children, but no one unless a fool will count on being understood by his own future self, as it is probable he will be by the latter party either quite ignored or written down an ass. Seeing then that . . . Lethe is not a river of Hades only, but of earth also, flowing in and out across our life's track, sundering and isolating the seven ages from each other and killing all the ties of sympathy, so that each varying personality is an island by itself, sympathizing with itself only, to which the past is dead and the future an

enigma—is it not strange in view of these facts that the arbitrary series of parts so incongruous, the individuality, should ever have been called a unit, the molecule of human consciousness?

A man who should suddenly jump from twenty to fifty could by no means easily be persuaded that he was the same person, but let him come to fifty by graduated stages and he will complacently flatter himself that he has retained his personal identity all through.

Often we are greater strangers to our own past personalities than are other individuals. Social intercourse frequently affords striking illustrations of this. You meet a man who was your familiar friend twenty years ago, and find him so much changed as to be a quite other person. . . . So far is he from preserving any identity with his former self, that he is a stranger to it while you love it. Across the years you join hands with it: his new self is a mere interloper in your communion with his old self . . .

. . . in bidding adieu to your friends you bid them an eternal farewell, for though after a few years you may meet again, your old friend is then another person and so too are you. Our grief for the dead is largely based on an illusion in the same way. We mourn a friend dead years ago: and yet we must know, recognizing the changes in ourself in the meantime, that this friend as he then was would no longer be our friend quite as he used to be. What we now miss is not then him as he died but him as he would have perhaps or probably become had he lived. We miss not anything that was or is but something that might have been, a pure illusion. And so too of friends long parted pining for each other. In remembering the days we passed with friends now dead we should remember that we too, who then were, are now dead: we are not survivors.

The term personal identity, which means personal sameness as applied to the whole course of a life is, by this showing, a misnomer. There is no sameness between our present and past personalities but only a graduated differentiation. . . . It is our fate that we should then ever labor for others, for our heirs, our future selves. What we plant another reaps, and often finds not to his taste or at all what he would have planted. . . . How often too do we see blameless eld doing penance for the sins of youth. The person in which we are punished or rewarded is seldom the person in which we wrought the good or ill. It is in reality just as unjust (as we call it) that the sins of youth should be visited upon age as that those of fathers should be visited upon their children.

In this life of the individual lie hid a thousand deaths of the person: we die daily, and it is largely if not wholly an illusion of the senses which makes that personal death which happens to coincide with the cataclysm of the individual seem of so much more moment than the hundred personal deaths which have preceded it.

. . . under what form can we possibly conceive of an identity or essence of the individual which should sum up and combine the child, youth, man, father, grandsire, and dotard, nay not only the seven but the seventy times seven different phases of the mental, moral, and emotional nature which a lifetime presents? What arithmetic would here avail us to get at the greatest common divisor of these so various personalities, to strike an average between the lad and the dotard? Evidently the subtle common principle and essence we are seeking must needs be some sort of pure or nearly pure being without the attributes of personality, for these attributes have changed many times; in fine, something quite impersonal. This sort of *reductio ad absurdum* is perhaps as conclusive a method as any of indicating the difficulties in the way of conceiving an identity of the individual as distinct from the identities of the [successive] personalities.

It is of course admitted that the life of a man is a piece of continuous growth, and that the present personality grows out of the past and is related to it as effect to cause or consequent to antecedent. But this by no means implies a persistent identity. Succession, however gradual, is not identity: cause is not identical with effect. Otherwise were we identical with our parents and the ancestry whence our traits and life are derived, and so at last were all creation identical with the original egg. Yesterday indeed determines today and without it today were not, but none the less it is not today.

We go on calling a river the same though its volume is constantly changing. Again we call it the same at the source and at the mouth . . . we call a nation the same through its life of a thousand years: we call a human body the same from birth to death, though not the end of a single year finds in its structure one particle that was there twelve months before. A book could be filled with instances of this loose ascription of identity. Now in the same sense that the river and streamlet, the river now and the river an hour ago, the barbarous tribe and the polished and powerful nation, the body of today and the body of a year ago, in the same sense in which these are identical and not otherwise, can iden-

tity be predicated of that series of personalities called the individual. . . . whence the feeling that leads me to save out of my superabundance for my old age? . . . The disposition of the present man to feel an interest in and provide for his future self is largely a result of culture and observation, of civilization. I would define it as a part of those general habits and tendencies in regard to the exercise of providence, political and social, which distinguish the civilized from the savage economy. The animating principle of these habits and tendencies is a growing sense of common interest with the past, the future, with ancestors, contemporaries, and posterity, with general ideas social and political, a range altogether transcending the personal instincts. As also transcending the strictly personal instinct, which is limited to present time, and is therefore to be classed with the habits and tendencies above described, I set the disposition to feel an interest in the future self. This disposition is a species of altruism or unselfishness not in essence different from the other unselfish habits and tendencies with which I have classed it.

I would not however be understood to deny that the personality is far more intimately connected though not identified with its predecessors and successors in the individuality of which it is a phase than with other individuals. The personalities are in fact bound together as are the successive representatives of a noble race, inhabiting the same ancestral mansions, and exercising the same functions, maintaining or adding to the same escutcheon. Memory, anticipation, I may say as it were a sort of family feeling, supports in these personalities a pride, a shame, an abiding interest in the fortunes and achievements of their ancestors and descendants. But this identity of interests no more implies real identity in the one case than the other. . . . As a question of political economy, though this consideration has, of course, no weight on the mind, it is manifestly a greater economy of forces for each person to look out for his future selves than for any other dependent class in society. In this sense charity may be truly said to begin at home. It seems then not difficult to explain the disposition of the civilized man to lay up his superabundance for his future self rather than spend it on strangers, in a manner perfectly consistent with the theory of personalities previously maintained.

. . . what is called the personal identity is not an identity either of fact or consciousness which persists through an individual life or any con-

siderable part of it, but is only the consciousness of the presently existing personality, so that our past, present, and future selves are in reality much more like entirely different individuals than we are wont to think. The gradual fading of memory is a perpetual curtailment of life at one end keeping pace with its increase at the other, maintaining the lit period at a uniform length as the evening following the dawn keeps the day at a certain duration. By the failure of memory we yearly lose our grasp on as much life consciousness as with each new year we gain. Though a man equal the years of Methuselah, at any one time he would have a consciousness of only a comparatively brief epoch. . . . Seeing thus that each epoch is a life by itself not aided in intensity by other epochs, the advantage of a long life over a short one does not appear. There is in fact no such thing as a long life: all are short.

It is not the death of physical corruption which proves us mortal. Our changing selves die daily. About these deathbeds gather no weeping friends, no expectant heirs, no priests with ghostly consolations. But by every test of mortality they are deaths as absolute, as uncontrovertible as those the undertaker lives by. . . . To remember is to walk a city of the dead. A tender reverence is the fitting mood.[18]

The manuscript ends with an unfinished sentence. Elsewhere there are hints that the unity a man feels is unity with universal being. For instance, on a sheet of paper in a bundle of manuscript we find this stray paragraph, which also is unfinished:

It seems that that which passes for the sense of personal identity is in reality but a sense of an intimate connection in the group of our bodily and mental faculties, a connection indissoluble by us, welded by passions kept before us by pains and by pleasures, but never losing to our insight the character of a connection purely arbitrary, dissoluble without prejudice to a certain core of being. Whatever this core of being, this innermost consciousness of being may be, it has nothing individual, nothing personal in it. Individuality is id. . .[19]

Again, in one of the "Eliot Carson" manuscripts we have an account of a college class reunion in which the college mates of years ago have the "willing yet forced cordiality with which strangers meet, whose tie is friendship to mutual absent friends. Their boyish selves had been mutual friends;

[18] Unpublished papers (B3b).

[19] *Ibid.* (B3b).

therefore it was only decent that they, though now grown stranger to each other, should be cordial. So far, however, as this involved any pretense that these were the same persons those boys were, it was felt to be a pathetic fraud." [20]

When Eliot Carson, in one of the fragmentary manuscripts intended for that story, gave up his job and his chance to be superintendent of the local textile mill and chose freedom with a life of extreme frugality, he was keeping faith with another person, a boy who once was Eliot Carson. The account proceeds:

> I think half the melancholy of remembering youthful days, especially perhaps college days, is the feeling we have degenerated since then. We are conscious of our failure to fulfill the ideals of our manhood that we then cherished. We find ourselves unable to honor the death that our youth, in its faith, dies, upon our maturity. Don't you think, old fellow, if the boys we were at twenty could be materialized by some Spiritualistic process (I have often dreamed of such), and called from that limbo where past selves assist resurrection, and could be introduced to the men we are today, that the interview would be a rather trying one to the latter? Don't you think that the bitter disappointment which those youth would scarcely be able to conceal would be rather hard to bear? I need not say that it is not any lack of money or fame that would humiliate us in such an interview. These are not attainments that measure the man. It would be our stunted mental growth, our culture in the arts and letters arrested almost at the day of our graduation, the withering away of what, for lack of other terms we call the soul, meaning thereby that set of sympathies and susceptibilities of a man which are capable of multiplying him by infinity, and the culture of which is the only object worth while in life.[21]

If we carry Bellamy's ideas to their logical conclusion we come close to Whitehead's concept of personality as a moving focus in a flow of events influencing all that is without, and influenced in turn by it all. Not only is a man such a focus of events and forces, but so are all of his groupings and continuities, such as cities, nations, societies.[22]

[20] *Ibid.* (B2–E.C.–28).

[21] *Ibid.* (B2–E.C.–40, 41).

[22] How shall we appraise this theory of Edward Bellamy that an individual life is made up of a succession of personalities? If we take the theory literally we meet with serious difficulties. Many persons would hold that there is greater continuity of pattern in an individual life than his argument would imply. Moreover, if the theory is carried to the ultimate extreme,

EMANCIPATION FROM NEMESIS

In a later novel, *Miss Ludington's Sister,* published three or four years before *Looking Backward,* we have Bellamy's last published thoughts on this issue before his attention was diverted to another field. In that book he presents the fourth and final step in his thinking on the subject. The story is of a woman, Ida Ludington, who, as a girl in a small Massachusetts village like some of those near Bellamy's Chicopee Falls, was beautiful, vigorous, well-to-do, and a social leader. Then, to quote from the book: "She was about twenty years old, at the height of her beauty and in the full tide of youthful enjoyment, when she fell ill of a dreadful disease, and

---

it becomes a forerunner of Santayana's "philosophy of essences." Personality would be reduced to a *blitzgeist,* a flash of spirit changing at every instance, and the infinitely numerous "essences" of Santayana would be necessary to supply the spiritual counterparts.

Is not what we have in reality a succession of varying degrees of likeness in a continuous flow of personality? In two succeeding seconds the likenesses are almost complete and the differences slight. As between infancy and old age the differences are very great and the observable likenesses are slight.

But we must not take the theory too literally or we shall lose its value. As an analogy to reality it has practical usefulness; and that is not a misuse, for all thought is analogy. We can define any idea only by comparing it with other impressions or experiences we have had. No two experiences are exactly alike, and so every such comparison is imperfect, leaving something to be desired. It follows that thinking of necessity is not an exact process, but is a series of approximations, of comparisons, of parables.

If we get this fact clearly in mind we do not ask of any theory or description that it shall be an exact description of reality, for none such ever existed. The most we can ask of a theory or of an idea is that its similarity to reality shall be close enough so that it does not lead us astray in the practical work at hand. We do not ask of a foot rule that it shall be accurate to the last atom or light wave, but that it shall be true within the use we want to make of it; and the degree of accuracy we demand will not be the same in measuring a cartload of gravel as in measuring the bearings of a watch.

As a practicable, dependable, and convenient device for thinking, which is all that can be claimed for any "truth" or doctrine or principle, the idea of a succession of personalities has substantial value. Its reasonable use might prove to be unexpectedly helpful in such fields as ethics, sociology, and criminology, and in the conduct of life of every man.

The reference in the quotation from "Eliot Carson" to ideals of youth suggests another analogy which might have been even more helpful to Bellamy than that of a succession of personalities. The very essence of any individual life is a spirit or pattern which strives for complete expression. Every acorn has within itself a pattern of the fully developed oak, with a definite place assigned for every twig and every leaf. The innate drive of its life is to fulfill that pattern. Yet, as the tree grows in the forest, that complete fulfillment is prevented by the competition of other trees; or by some weakness within itself.

So the spirit of a man is an ideal pattern striving for fulfillment. That fulfillment tends to be marred by outer circumstance and by inward weakness. The feeling of nemesis or of guilt or of depravity is a feeling of surrender, a feeling that if the pattern once is marred the fault never can be overcome. As against that pessimism is a feeling of confidence in the power of life to repair the injury, to recreate the broken part, to grow again into symmetry of fulfillment according to the inner spirit or pattern—a faith that the continuity of personality or of pattern is so persistent, and the vitality of life so great, that injury to the spirit need be only a passing circumstance, and not a conclusive frustration.

for a long time lay between life and death. Or, to state the case more accurately, the girl did die,—it was a sad and faded woman who rose from that bed of sickness." [23]

When her village was industrialized and her few remaining friends were being married, she moved to a tract of land on Long Island which she had inherited and there built a replica of her native village, where she lived alone with her servants. She came to live in the past, and to worship a likeness of herself in the days of her young beauty:

> It was not indeed as herself, but as another, that she thought of this fair girl, who had vanished from the earth, leaving a picture as her sole memento. . . . She mourned for her girlish self, which had been so cruelly effaced from the world of life, as for a person, near and precious to her beyond the power of words to express, who had died.
>
> Her father and mother she did not mourn as one without hope, believing that she should see them some day in another world; but from the death of change which the girl had died no Messiah had ever promised any resurrection.[24]

Miss Ludington was rearing a nephew who caught her affection for the memory of the beautiful girl in the picture and developed an infatuation for it. Then, while away at school he becomes infected with the theory that a person is in fact a succession of personalities. He tells his aunt of this new belief, his letter being in effect a summary of the theory of successive personalities which already has been quoted. For the sake of the plot of his story, Bellamy has this young man divulge a further and a fantastic theory:

> "If our past selves, who were dead before [ourselves of the present moment] . . . were alive, had no souls, then why suppose our present selves have any? Childhood, youth, and manhood are the sweetest, the fairest, the noblest, the strongest of the persons who together constitute an individual. Are they soulless? Do they go down in darkness to oblivion while immortality is reserved for the withered soul of age? If we must believe that there is but one soul to all the persons of an individual it would be easier to believe that it belongs to youth or manhood, and that age is soulless. For if youth, strong-winged and ardent, full of fire and power, perish, leaving nothing behind save a few traces in the memory,

[23] Bellamy, Edward, *Miss Ludington's Sister* (Boston, James R. Osgood and Company, 1884), p. 3.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 17.

how shall the flickering spirit of age have strength to survive the blast of death?

"The individual, in its career of seventy years, has not one body, but many, each wholly new. . . . Shall we say that none of these bodies has a soul except the last, merely because the last decays more suddenly than the others?

"Or is it maintained that, although there is such utter diversity—physical, mental, moral—between infancy and manhood, youth and age, nevertheless, there is a certain essence common to them all, and persisting unchanged through them all, and that this is the soul of the individual? But such an essence as should be the same in the babe and the man, the youth and the dotard, could be nothing more than a colorless abstraction, without distinctive qualities of any kind,—a mere principle of life like the fabled jelly protoplasm. Such a fancy reduces the hope of immortality to an absurdity.

"No! no! It is not any such grotesque or fragmentary immortality that God has given us. The Creator does not administer the universe on so niggardly a plan. Either there is no immortality for us which is intelligible or satisfying, or childhood, youth, manhood, age, and all the other persons who make up an individual, live forever, and one day will meet and be together in God's eternal present . . .

". . . it is the long procession of our past selves, each with its own peculiar charm and incommunicable quality, slipping away from us as we pass on, and not the last self of all whom the grave entraps, which constitutes our chief contribution to mortality. What shall it avail for the grave to give up its handful if there be no immortality for this great multitude?" [25]

As the story proceeds an unscrupulous spiritualist medium, who in reality is a girlhood acquaintance of Miss Ludington and who knows the circumstances of her early life, learns of the young man's obsession and arranges for a séance in which he and his aunt shall see a materialization of her youth and beauty. The illusion is completely successful, and the conspiracy is carried further to secure a home and competence for the young women who impersonated the spirit of the lost youth. During a later séance the medium feigns death, and so the materialization cannot be "dematerialized," but is with them as a young woman of flesh and blood. Miss Ludington and her nephew take the young woman home, where she plays a part

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 29–31, 32–33.

as the reincarnation of Miss Ludington's youth, for which she had been carefully trained by the medium.

Then appears the development of Bellamy's final contribution to the subject of nemesis. The young girl falls in love with the nephew, but his and Miss Ludington's sincere affection for her awakens her conscience and she cannot carry through her plot of deceit. She runs away, leaving a letter behind telling of her deceit. Finally she is discovered and brought back, but burdened with the same overwhelming sense of guilt and contrition which is pictured in Madeline in *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*. This time, however, the outcome is different:

> "I ought not to let him marry me. I know I ought not. I am not fit for him," faltered Ida; "but I cannot refuse him anything, and I love him so!"
>
> "You are quite fit for him," said Miss Ludington, kissing her, "and I can well believe he loves you. It would be strange, indeed, if he did not. You are a noble and a tender woman, and he will be very happy."
>
> In the days that followed, Ida was at first much puzzled to account not only for the evident genuineness of the esteem which her friends cherished for her. . . . It was quite as if she had made amends for another person's sin, in contrast with whose conduct her own nobility stood out in fine relief.
>
> And that, in fact, is exactly the way they did look at it. Their habit of distinguishing between the successive phases of an individual life as distinct persons, made it impossible for them to take any other view of the matter.
>
> In their eyes the past was good or bad for itself, and the present good or bad for itself, and an evil past could no more shadow a virtuous present than a virtuous present could retroact to brighten or redeem an ugly past. It is the soul that repents which is ennobled by repentance. The soul that did the deed repented of is past forgiving. There was no affectation on the part of Paul and Miss Ludington of ignoring the fraud which Ida had practised, or pretending to forget it. This was not necessary out of any consideration for her feelings, for they did not hold that it was she who was guilty of that fraud, but another person.
>
> As gradually she comprehended the way in which they looked upon her, and came to perceive that they unquestioningly held that she had no responsibility for her past self, but was a new being, she was filled with a great exhilaration, the precise like of which was, perhaps, never before

known to a repentant wrong-doer. As they believed, so would she believe. With a great joy she put the shameful past behind her and took up her new life. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

Each day, almost each hour, discovered to him some new trait, some unsuspected grace of mind or heart, till, in this glowing girl, so bright, so blithe, so piquant, he had difficulty in recognizing any likeness, save of face and form, to the moody, freakish, melancholy, hysterical, and altogether eerie Ida Ludington.[26]

Thus we come to the climax of Edward Bellamy's consideration of the subject of nemesis. How much of this is original with Bellamy, and how much is simply a recovery, with some degree of fidelity, of the original spirit of the "good news" of Christianity, with its liberation from the Hebrew sense of guilt and from the Greek nemesis, the reader will be left to decide. Along the way in dealing with this issue Bellamy gave hints and made suggestions which further express his mind. In *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* the doctor remarked:

Scarcely any application of the process gives me so much pleasure to dream about as its use to make forgiving possible, full, free, perfect, joyous forgiving, in cases where otherwise, however good our intentions, it is impossible, simply because we can not forget. Because they can not forget, friends must part from friends who have wronged them, even though they do from their hearts wish them well.

". . . it is the memory of our past sins which demoralizes us, by imparting a sense of weakness and causing loss of self-respect. Take the memory away, and a bad act would leave us no worse in character than we were before its commission, and not a whit more likely to repeat it than we were to commit it the first time.

". . . there is no such thing as moral responsibility for past acts, no such thing as real justice in punishing them, for the reason that human beings are not stationary existences, but changing, growing, incessantly progressive organisms, which in no two moments are the same. Therefore justice, whose only possible mode of proceeding is to punish in present time for what is done in past time, must always punish a person more or less similar to, but never identical with, the one who committed the offense, and therein must be no justice."

"I can see," said Henry after a pause, "that when half a lifetime has

[26] *Miss Ludington's Sister*, pp. 251–253, 254.

intervened between a crime and its punishment, and the man has reformed, there is a certain lack of identity. I have always thought punishments in such cases very barbarous."

"Yes," said the Doctor, "flagrant cases of that sort take the general eye, and people say that they are instances of retribution rather than justice. The unlikeness between the extremes of life, as between the babe and the man, the lad and the dotard, strikes every mind, and all admit that there is not any apparent identity between these widely parted points in the progress of a human organism. How then? How soon does identity begin to decay, and when is it gone—in one year, five years, ten years, twenty years, or how many? Shall we fix fifty years as the period of a moral statute of limitation, after which punishment shall be deemed barbarous? No, no. . . . What is past is eternally past. So far as the essence of justice is concerned, there is no difference between one of the cases of punishment which you called barbarous, and one in which the penalty follows the offense within the hour. There is no way of joining the past with the present, and there is no difference between what is a moment past and what is eternally past."

"Then you don't believe in the punishment of crime?" said Henry.

"Most emphatically I do," replied the Doctor; "only I don't believe in calling it justice or ascribing it a moral significance. The punishment of criminals is a matter of public policy and expediency, precisely like measures for the suppression of nuisances or the prevention of epidemics. It is needful to restrain those who by crime have revealed their likelihood to commit further crimes, and to furnish by their punishment a motive to deter others from crime.

"My process is for those who can not attain to my philosophy. I break for the weak the chain of memory which holds them to the past; but stronger souls are independent of me. They can unloose the iron links and free themselves. Would that more had the needful wisdom and strength thus serenely to put their past behind them, leaving the dead to bury their dead, and go blithely forward, taking each new day as a life by itself, and reckoning themselves daily newborn, even as verily they are! Physically, mentally, indeed, the present must be for ever the outgrowth of the past, conform to its conditions, bear its burdens; but moral responsibility for the past the present has none, and by the very definition of the words can have none." [27]

[27] *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*, pp. 114, 119, 121, 123, 124, 125.

Dr. Heidenhoff's Process was written before Bellamy was thirty. *Miss Ludington's Sister,* written about five years later, shows greater maturity. In one of the conversations in that story is the following comment:

> "When the world comes to recognize the composite character of the individual, that it is composed of not one, but many persons, a new department will be added to ethics, relating to the duties of the successive selves of an individual to one another. It will be recognized on the one hand that it is the duty of a man to fulfil all reasonable obligations incurred by his past selves, on the same principle that a pious son fulfils the equitable obligations incurred by a parent. This duty is, indeed, recognized to-day, although not on the correct basis. As regards the ethical relation of a man to the selves who succeed him, a wholly new idea will be introduced. It will be seen that the duty of a man to lead a wise life, to be prudent, to make the most of his powers, to maintain a good name, is not a duty to himself, merely an enlightened selfishness, as it is now called, but a genuine form of altruism, a duty to others, as truly as if those others bore different names instead of succeeding to his name. It will be seen that a man's duty to his later selves is like the duty of a father to his helpless children: to provide for their inheritance, to see that he leaves them a sound body and a good name, if nothing more. It will be perceived that the man who is charitably called 'his own worst enemy,' is not only no better but worse than if he were the enemy of his neighbors, because he is blasting coming lives that have a far nearer claim upon him than any neighbor can have.
>
> "There will arise, also, in that day, I fancy," pursued Paul, "some rather delicate questions as to how far a man may properly bind his future selves by pledges and engagements which he has no means of knowing will meet with their approval, and which may quite possibly prove intolerable yokes to them." [28]

Edward Bellamy had a vision of a spiritual emancipation which the great culture of Greece did not achieve, and which was but partly realized in Christianity from the prophetic strain in Judaism. Without some clear-cut break with tradition there seemed no assurance that this freedom could be won in the New England Calvinist atmosphere, or from modern orthodox Christianity. The very severity of the Puritan concept did contribute

[28] *Miss Ludington's Sister,* pp. 182–184.

to rebellion by such leaders as Channing, Emerson, Whittier, and Holmes, which gave New England leadership in liberal religion. However, this liberation from creed did not wholly eliminate the element of nemesis from the New England atmosphere.

It is a not uncommon method of the philosopher—though he may not be aware of the fact—first to arrive at his final conclusions by a process of intuition, and then to build an imposing system of reasoning to justify them. Very often the intuitive conclusions are sound, though the processes of reasoning by which, perhaps, he thinks he arrived at them are inconclusive. If the intuitive convictions of philosophers should be presented as such, much eyestrain and head-scratching over obscure technical language and over involved reasoning might be saved.

Perhaps Bellamy is not free from this criticism. His conclusions may be better than the reasons he gave for them. He had an intuition of profound importance—that men have gone far to excess in the extent to which they see the future as burdened by the past or put under obligation by it, and that an attitude of mind can be developed in which the sense of nemesis, of guilt, or of depravity, and an excessive feeling of obligation may be dismissed, and that to a far greater extent than has been usual, life may begin new each day, with its promise vigorously surviving unfortunate circumstance. This is a sound conviction of very far-reaching application and significance, and its validity is not destroyed by flaws in the reasoning which he supplied to sustain it. The clinical psychologists, whose field has developed since Bellamy's day, will recognize in his statements some elements in common with their own principles.

FREEDOM THROUGH THE PASSING OF A CULTURE

There are other ways in which a cultural deformity such as the exaggerated sense of guilt may be liquidated. The cause of an exaggerated sense of nemesis or of guilt is a warping of the human spirit and the loss of a wholesome sense of proportion. Whatever restores a normal sense of proportion will help to cure that evil. Bellamy realized this. Sylvester Baxter records a conversation with him concerning the book *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process:* "In talking this over," wrote Baxter, "Mr. Bellamy has said that this feeling in George Bayley [the young man with a tragic sense of guilt whose testimony introduces the theme in that book] was really due to egotism, a form of vanity. The real lesson of the story is that one should

have the moral strength to look impersonally upon his own past and to be able to forgive himself just as he would forgive others." [29]

The prevalence of an exaggerated sense of nemesis or of guilt is such a weakness as might not withstand satire, which is a process of exposing distortions of perspective. Just as duelling tended to disappear when those not committed to it ridiculed the absurdity of risking the achievement of a lifetime to avenge a petty insult, so the excessive sense of nemesis and of guilt tended to fade away when its mystical charm of traditional indoctrinations was broken.

A pattern of life may be diluted or eliminated by the passing of the culture of which it is a part. When the Greeks were overwhelmed by barbarians who burned manuscripts of classic masterpieces to roast their eggs, played dice on incomparable paintings, and dumped "immortal" marble statues into their lime kilns to burn for lime, the good and bad in the Greek cultural tradition tended to disappear and the terrible servitude of the Greek spirit to the doctrine of nemesis tended to fade away. This process of undiscriminating destruction of good and bad in a culture has some similarity to certain present-day political movements. In Greece however the process of emancipation was assisted also by the coming of Christianity.

Immigrants who poured into Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, beginning about a century ago, were mostly of peasant stock. They commonly lacked inherited intellectual discipline, education, and formal philosophy. While they brought a religion which held to the doctrine of total depravity, in many cases it rested lightly upon them. Moreover, the Roman Catholic habit of confession to a priest, by periodically relieving the sense of guilt, was conducive to a more normal temper of life. These newcomers so diluted the Puritan pattern, good and bad, that its inheritance began to fade. Also, as the New England breed moved westward it tended to "travel light," taking along none but rudimentary baggage, material and spiritual, and in the West it blended on nearly equal terms with immigration from Europe, with simple-minded men close to the soil to whom the doctrine of nemesis had not been such a stark reality.

Wherever social tradition is a handicap, there a pioneer society has an advantage, for it has left much of its cultural pattern behind. Where cultural tradition is an asset, there the pioneer will lose values by the same process. By sheer ignorance and disregard of the past the new elements in

[29] Baxter, Sylvester, "The Author of *Looking Backward*," *New England Magazine*, n.s. I (September, 1889), 95.

American life to a considerable degree have been liberated from the depressing sense of nemesis, of guilt, of original depravity. For these reasons such a rebellion against the past as that of Bellamy tends to lose a part of its significance in the present-day world.

Yet if today we could get a definite quantitative measure of human tragedy and of its causes, it is possible, notwithstanding the sad state of present government and society, we should find that of the present-day total sum of tragedy a greater part is due to this servitude of the mind than to inequalities of the social or economic order. Such burdens of the spirit exist for the economically well-to-do no less certainly than for the poor or the oppressed. After economic inequity has been substantially removed it still will be necessary to achieve emancipation from this other pervading and elusive control.

There are differences in value of the different processes of liberation. The barbarians almost liquidated both the good and the bad in Greece. In contrast, judging by the New Testament record, the process of Jesus was one of discriminating selection. He said, "I come not to destroy, but to fulfill." Edward Bellamy was of the latter type. He, too, was profoundly revolutionary. Yet his aim was not to destroy the past, but to fulfill it by that discriminating process of liberation. His half-conscious recognition of the depth of the revolutionary process saved him from that frequent shortcoming of revolutionists—a feeling that the destruction of what exists must be the first and major part of their program.

One will have no difficulty in finding flaws in Bellamy's philosophy of personality and of nemesis. Doubtless he saw grave faults in it himself, or he probably would not have confined its public expression to almost casual fiction. Yet he had hold of an idea of great significance. Had he not been turned aside to the field of social reform by the success of *Looking Backward,* or had he been favored with the years and the vitality to develop further the possibilities of his vision and to give it great and convincing expression, he might have won a place as a liberator of the human spirit from compulsions which are falsely conceived to be in the innate nature of things, whereas they are but arbitrary and capricious sets in the individual and social mind from which a man may be free if he but sees the truth and lives by it.

This problem to which Edward Bellamy addressed himself still remains for others to meet. Many today are working to free men from economic

servitude; relatively few are concerned to achieve freedom from servitude to the man-made sense of nemesis. Enough of Bellamy's mind and spirit have been preserved to point the way. Perhaps someone else with power to make his vision live and work greatly in men's lives may continue what he began.

IV. THE ECONOMY OF HAPPINESS

One of the great problems of the future is that of promoting the organization of happiness and its favorable conditions.

—John E. Boodin

Good pleasure is the pleasure that endures.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

SINCE time immemorial reflective persons have observed the ephemeral and elusive nature of pleasure. Yet, notwithstanding the teaching of the ages most men continue to be naive, and to expect that the achievement of their specific desires will bring enduring happiness. What successful revolution ever was prosecuted without that simple faith?

From a perusal of *Looking Backward* and *Equality,* unless one should read very carefully he might not suspect that their author did not share this nearly universal credulity. Yet Bellamy was not simple-minded. He looked unfalteringly at the problem of happiness, and gives evidence of a critical, inquiring attitude toward this, as toward so many subjects. Universal economic well-being, he wrote in *Looking Backward,* ". . . so far from seeming to us an ultimate attainment, appears but as a preliminary to anything like real human progress. We have but relieved ourselves of an impertinent and needless harassment which hindered our ancestors from undertaking the real ends of existence. We are merely stripped for the race; no more." [1]

Bellamy considered the problem of happiness not only from the standpoint of the philosopher, but also from that of the physiologist and the psychologist. The expression "the economy of happiness," which occurs over and over again in his notebooks, indicates his belief that a maximum of the sense of well-being which all men crave will not result from the drift of circumstance but only from insight and design in dealing with human nature. He would study the biological nature and possibilities of happiness just as he would study the nature of economic well-being. Numberless men since before the days of Buddha have wrestled with the issue through the media of philosophy and religion, but was not Bellamy something of a pioneer in thus approaching it in a scientific temper? In time physiological and psychological study of the nature of the sense of well-being will

[1] *Looking Backward,* p. 291.

take a place of importance in men's attention. When that interest is well developed such inquiries as those he suggested will seem primitive and elemental, but none the less fundamental.

He did not carry his thinking on the nature and conditions of happiness to the point of clearly formulating and stating his opinions, but there seems to have been a progression in his thinking on the subject, beginning with ideas and observations which have been common to reflective men through the ages. When he was twenty-four he had discovered the evanescence of satisfaction with physical possessions:

> The sense of material wealth is dull, cloying, and unsatisfying. The sense of intellectual wealth is an abiding and substantial satisfaction. The sense of power which material wealth carries with it is but the gross material counterpart of the serene consciousness which mental power induces, the sense of a grasp of the universe.[2]

In some of his early notebooks he goes over the old ground of philosophers and moralists in picturing the advantages of moderation to be secured by self-control. A familiar passage is quoted again, because it is a key to his way of life: "A very little scope of variety judiciously disposed, by a wise economist of happiness, may give far more zest to life than unlimited resources employed without discretion." [3] An entry in his journal when he was twenty-four also is pertinent:

> To retain the child's zest for the pleasures of life while possessing the ascetic's or stoic's power of renouncing them without a pang whenever it may be needful, that is the ideal of philosophy. To go to either extreme is easy but it is equally a mistake. The worldling and the ascetic blunder, the one as grossly as the other. The philosophy of neither deserves to be called a philosophy. To be equally able to enjoy and to renounce, that is the problem of life, a problem I greatly fear insolvable, yet one not without hope.[4]

This seems to be the principle on which he endeavored to administer his own life. "Our first step in civilizing the savages," he wrote again, "is to discontent them with poverty. The effect of our ripest philosophy is to create content therewith." [5]

It was also when he was twenty-four that the following entry appeared:

[2] Unpublished papers (B2–4–13).
[3] *Ibid.* (B1–2–11).
[4] *Ibid.* (B1–2–22, 23).
[5] *Ibid.* (B2–4–20).

The early Persians, those of whom it was said that they were taught to ride, to draw the bow and to speak the truth, were unable to understand the object of changing one thing for another. That is to say, they were proof against that charm of novelty of change for its own sake which is a mainspring of human action, and a chief source of human folly and suffering. For my part I think we might all very wisely go to school to the ancient Persians. What, indeed, is the use of changing one thing which tolerably subserves its end for another? It is true you enjoy a fresh sensation. But soon becoming weary of the new possession, the passion for novelty, grown stronger by indulgence, impels to another change. This time the fresh sensation is less vivid and with every new change grows less and less so, till at last, although become more a slave than ever of this passion, its indulgence ceases to bring you pleasure, and your last state is worse than the first. The adage says truly, "Variety is the spice of life," but, like all other spices, it must be employed sparingly if the palate is to remain susceptible to its best and most delicate effect.[6]

We find him repeatedly turning over in his mind the conditions which produce a sense of well-being. He wrote: "Do the motives from which we do anything make the least difference with the pleasure we get from them? Aren't those as happy who act on a sense of duty as those who act from a philosophy of self-interest?"[7] He looked upon happiness as a masterpiece of life and of nature:

Nobody that is enjoying himself ought to be interfered with in the interests of one who is not. This is a maxim that ought to appeal to any economist of happiness. . . . Most seem to take it for granted that happy folks ought to be interfered with in the interest of unhappy folks, that the former ought to defer to the latter; that, in fact, an unhappy person has a sort of right to establish an equality, not by being happy himself, but by reducing other people's happiness. . . . This is clearly absurd, for while people not having a good time lose nothing but even gain a faint reflex of happiness . . . the latter, in the reverse case, could not generally be at all certain of making sad people happy by sacrificing themselves to them. . . . Happiness is so complex, almost miraculous, a thing which none may analyze, that when it is given to anybody we should regard such an one as in a sort made sacred and crowned of God, to be served by the rest of us for what virtue might be imparted to us

[6] *Ibid.* (B1–2–10, 11). [7] *Ibid.* (B2–1–23).

by the touch of their garments. For one that is happy I have a reverence as for an angel. In nearing them I feel that I stand on holy ground. In this feeling mingles no pious effort or unselfishness because I ought (accursed word, with its cheap and sordid associations and motives) but I am moved as if in the presence of a beautiful thing. Happiness is beautiful, it touches my aesthetic nature. . . . Make way for the happy, and let the sad be glad to strew their path with flowers. . . . We are envious of happiness only as we think we see the means whereby it was attained, and that having them we might be happy. An error: the means we ascribe happiness to could not produce it. It is a miracle, a subtle compounding of unknown essences, the secret of which no philosopher can fathom.[8]

There is a strain of deep truth in this comment. If all men should decide to be unhappy together until possibility of happiness for all had been assured, would not the results be as disappointing as if all should agree to remain ignorant until all could be educated together? Is not happiness the greatest of all arts, the mastery of which can be achieved only through long time and much exploration; and is not anyone who in some degree achieves that mastery a contributor to human welfare?

An entry in one of his notebooks, when he was twenty-two years old, introduces a theme which reappears throughout his life:

It seems to me that it is by no means certain that one who loves and is loved much is to be envied. Doubtless there are manifold pleasures in the close and warm sympathies he enjoys, but on the other hand he is sadly hampered by these very ties. He has so many dispositions and feelings to consult in all his actions. He is morally in bondage, not to one, but to as many masters as he has fathers and mothers, brothers, sisters, and kinsmen. When a slave escapes his master he exults. But when a man breaks away from these other restraints he wounds his own heart not less deeply than the hearts of his friends.[9]

He saw extremes of happiness and of affection as disruptive: "These intense emotions, whether of pain or pleasure, these ravishments, we do not want them. . . . We look for a placid race that shall not alternate between honey and vinegar, but live on mild ambrosia ever. To love unwisely is to dread direfully. We will have no dread." [10]

[8] *Ibid.* (B1–2–15, 16).
[9] *Ibid.* (B1–1–17).
[10] *Ibid.* (B2–7–12).

Bellamy's mind played on all sides of the question. In contrast to the statement just quoted is the following, taken from the unfinished novel, "Eliot Carson":

> "Did you ever think how little real life there is in an average lifetime? Take all the hours of your sweet lifetime, for instance. When you have said or felt like saying, 'This is life,' 'This now is happiness,' or 'This is a sensation worth living for,' and suppose them added all together. I do not believe that these supreme hours in an average life of seventy years would, added together and lived continuously, make a fortnight. But, by God, what a fortnight! Seriously, Nelly, don't you think it would be an improvement on the plan of creation if Providence would just give us that fortnight, or let us say that by including moments of less perfect but yet considerable felicity, we could stretch it to three months, if Providence, I say, would give us those three months solid and then let us die, instead of making us drag through the remaining sixty-nine years and nine months of boresomeness, all which time the chemical constituents of our bodies might be doing some good to the trees and flowers?"
>
> "Pulling all the raisins out of plum pudding and eating them together has been often tried," said Nelly smiling, "but is not considered a good plan."
>
> "No, not by housewives," retorted Eliot. "It is too expensive, but the children like it." [11]

A theme that recurs in his notes is that the objects of affection should be relationships and values that endure, and so do not end in disillusionment and loss: "It will be a part of the plan of a future and wiser society to discourage the overgrowth of the affections, recognizing as indisputable that more misery results from excess of affectional development than from deficiency; the affectional natures, however, not to be repressed, but devoted to nature, the eternal, the ideal." [12]

As another sally of his mind in dealing with the problem of happiness he makes a suggestion which must have occurred to other men as well, that even sensations of unhappiness may be required to make their contribution. He wrote at the age of twenty-one:

> By the use of reason, reflection and philosophy one may become indurated against many disappointments of all kinds, nay, if it will be

[11] *Ibid.* (B2–EC–23, 24).

[12] *Ibid.* (B2–6–9).

believed, may even derive a rare sort of pleasure from the stirring up of himself which they produce, a feeling analogous to the mixed sensation of tickling.[13]

This seemingly commonplace remark has in it implications which "the wise economist of happiness" might develop into a very significant theme. If man can turn pain into desirable sensation, has he not taken a long step toward the mastery of tragedy?

He saw how much of happiness lies in anticipation. In an unpublished article on "The Spring Feeling" he touches upon this point:

> Very likely the streets are full of snow or slush, and even the time of mud has not come. But some momentary odor, some peculiar quality in a little patch of sunshine, some special geniality in the sunny side of the street, some one of these signs has distinctly and unequivocally heralded spring to your prophetic heart.
>
> In the strength of these confidential hints from nature, you can afford to trudge through snow and slush for a month to come, secretly smiling all the while. You can afford to take in good temper the humors of the dying season.
>
> Nor would it be a true economy of happiness to hurry the snow over much. Being so well assured of the spring, the longer it lingers, the longer its delight is on interest. The most we ever get of happiness is in the way of interest; there is almost always some fraud about paying over the principal.
>
> Indeed, the very first of spring, while the skies are yet bleak, and the earth sodden, and one can still say to himself, the best is yet to come, has the most unalloyed delight of all the season, nay of all the year. . . .
>
> The thermometer perhaps would not distinguish the feeling from that of November. But the thermometer has no soul. The difference between the cold which we know is to grow more, and that which we know is to grow less, is simply prodigious, and makes the whole difference between March and November. As yet there is not a bud visible to microscopic inspection. So much the better: we can still look forward to the first sign. Hope is a multiplying mirror, in which we see the delight in the coming pleasure . . .[14]

In a notebook earlier than *Looking Backward,* but perhaps after he was

[13] *Ibid.* (B1–1–10, 11).

[14] *Ibid.* (B3B–"The Spring Feeling").

thirty years old, Bellamy made an outline for "A Reorganization of Society to Extinguish Sorrow":

> Based on the observation that certain affections of men, women, and children are the causes of nearly all their sorrows, the chiefest of all causes of sorrow and the most piteous being parental love. It is not deemed that much happiness comes to parents from the cultivation of the tenderness of this relation, but it is believed that the anxiety and sorrow that spring from its indulgence tenfold exceed the happiness. Therefore it is resolved that parental love shall be modified by circumstances as to be greatly restricted. Mothers shall indeed nurse their infants but be relieved of nearly all other care of them, and fathers shall have no intimate relations with them. At an early age they shall be educated in kindergartens, their education and corrections shall not be determined by their parents, but by the State, consulting with the youth. As the provision for the care and maintenance of the child is to be wholly made by the State, the parents having no responsibility for the child will be without one of the chief inducements to devoted guidance. The only object of Nature in parental love is to provide for children's welfare. Society having been arranged to provide for that better than the parents possibly could, the parental love is but an effete survival, an aching root of a tooth no longer useful. The fraternal and sisterly tie and all family ties also loosened as consequence of discontinuance of family life. Play for the sentiment thus expressed found in a vast increase of intellectual and artistic sympathy, and in cultivation of the sense of the universal life in God.[15]

It is doubtful whether Bellamy ever realized the deep biological need of children for the intimate affection of parents, as has been disclosed by modern experimental psychology.

In turning over in his mind the part which the affections play as causes of both pain and pleasure he constantly returned to the theme of moderation, and to centering the affections on objects which are immune to loss or change. One may well guess that the love of his mother for her sons had been a source of much suffering to her, as one of them died young, and the others did not take the courses she had hoped. Also he had observed, what so seldom is clearly expressed in literature, that nature to achieve her design commonly gives anticipation of an extreme degree of felicity which is not

[15] *Ibid.* (B2–6–7).

to be realized in fact. The following rough notes, written apparently after *Looking Backward* and before *Equality,* that is, between his 37th and 47th year, indicate how his mind continued to deal with the problem:

> As to impossibility that love may cease eventually to be a source of intense sorrow through disappointment or bereavement: Shall people cease to love? No. But is it not conceivable they may love more rationally?
>
> First, take sexual love: Is it necessary in order to induce men and women to marry that they should anticipate far greater felicity from the marriage relation than it brings? This was necessary when, owing to barbarous conditions, nothing but a passion that was a madness could have led men to assume marriage. But as civilization increases (though not till a new social order shall make marriage no burden) there will not be needed a madness or a passion at all, but only a moderate preponderance of motive; then sorrow from the disappointment of the love passion will be reduced to very little.
>
> But will not the rapture from the love passion be likewise reduced? Not in the same degree. It is doubtful for one point, if those constitutionally jealous or piners given to pining get, even under the most fortunate conditions, so much pleasure out of love as the more genial and humane, the less intensely individual. As to the intenser raptures: they are, being necessarily followed by reactions of brutality, doubtless undesirable, and our outgrowth of them to be wished. Love will be without tragic undertone, a cheerful comradeship only of people who suit but do not adore each other.
>
> As to bereavement through family ties and through friendship: it is possible, probable, if we believe that evolution will destroy classes and conventionalities of all sorts, that people will be brought more nearly together, and that not only will the family relations involve vastly less in important respects, no dependence of one upon another, and of forced constant association, but from having less friends . . .
>
> Men and women will be broader and less intense correspondingly in their relations to one another, while a thousandfold more than now occupied with nature and the next steps of the race, i. e., that which is at present called the superhuman.
>
> The heart of man will (as is obviously rational and philosophical) be set less and less on the transitory and the perishable, and more and more on the spiritual and the infinite toward which man now tends.

> So shall passions, the strongest in man's nature, which have hitherto been chiefly directed to his preservation by their diversions into sexuality and the family relations, be directed to the general advancement and elevation of the human type; just as a steamship when driven by tempests has to put all her steam to work to keep from drifting to leeward, but when the storm ceases, by aid of the same steam power, is able to rush like a railroad train on her course.[16]

Neither *Looking Backward* nor *Equality* was written in any simple-minded belief that achievement of economic abundance and equality would bring an end to human tragedy, or that men would live happily ever after. Bellamy saw that most men in their poverty and their struggle for survival had been pressed to fight for sheer existence, and that only as that fight relaxed would they be able and inclined to face the deeper problems of life. Very generally, absence of extreme economic stress is necessary to the emergence of philosophy. It is possible, however, that Bellamy overestimated the proportion of men who under happy circumstances would become philosophers. If men should "live on mild ambrosia ever," how many would not go to sleep, and how vulnerable would they become before some new ambitious creature emerging from the apes, or some invader from Mars, or before some catastrophic change of their environment, such as a new glacial period—or even from "have not" men craving ambrosia?

[16] *Ibid.* (B2–7–10, 11).

V. THE RELIGION OF EDWARD BELLAMY

A man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. . . . By religion I do not mean . . . the church-creed he professes . . . We see men of all kinds of professed creeds attain to almost all degrees of worth or worthlessness under each or any of them. . . . But . . . the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest.

—Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*

But still my human hands are weak
  To hold your iron creeds:
Against the words ye bid me speak
  My heart within me pleads.

—John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Eternal Goodness*

With Edward Bellamy, philosophy, religion, ethics and economics were all interdependent—all essential elements of a single unified pattern of living and thinking. He remarked that "Nothing can be in the long run or on a large scale sound economics which is not sound ethics." The clear import of his writing and of his life is that nothing can be sound religion which is not also sound sense and sound philosophy. Yet Bellamy was concerned with religion, and we can get a fuller view of his overall philosophy by observing his handling of that interest.

With a minister for a father and with a mother who was a sincere, devout, and orthodox evangelical Christian, it was inevitable that Bellamy should be indoctrinated with a conventional religious pattern. As a boy he was thoroughly "converted," and joined his father's Baptist church at the age of fifteen. His early writings describe an attitude of religious devotion and of strong emotional experience which would have satisfied the desires of any evangelical minister.

However, his inquiring mind did not let him rest in peace. Before long he was actively questioning and soon was in outright rebellion against the pattern of thought and feeling that were his family inheritance. For a short time he associated with a fast and intemperate set, but found that he was acquiring, not freedom, but a new lot of servitudes. Thereupon he began

to withdraw from the drift of social affairs, and to work out his own way of life.

His early journals in which he recorded this transition are quoted in the chapter on "The Rebel" in his biography. They disclose an intense desire to get his life bearings, and a disdain of any other interests until he has done so. He has entirely abandoned Christian theology, though often he uses its phraseology, and he seems to be groping his way without authoritative chart or compass. Some of his manuscripts and notebook entries picture his state of mind:

December, 1871

> Sometimes, feeling the burden and continual harassment of existence, I grow bitterly at odds with my Maker for ever calling me forth from nothingness. Only the feeling of the utter bitter impotence of my plaint restrains me from desperate blasphemy. Nirvana, Nirvana, there is no other haven for the weary soul, and even there one would not be secure. The omnipotent summons of the creating God could always wake it from grateful slumber, balmy oblivion, once again to a new morning of life.
>
> Such thoughts are vain indeed. It were better to tire the body with the conquest of small things till it sleeps, to fill the mind with petty cares and small contemptible ambitions, as the starving man fills himself with water or stubble that the gnawing of his appetite may be stilled for a while.[1]

Such is the state of mind of young Bellamy at twenty-one, in his little room in New York, where he is working on the *Post*. To such a plight has doubt and questioning reduced the boy who, a few years before, after "conversion" in his father's church, found prayer and meditation so completely satisfying to his soul! Nor is this just the depression of an evening. He was in constant rebellion against that tyranny of life which would so occupy his time and his energies that this most important of all quests should fail. Repeatedly his journals and scraps of manuscript give expression to his rebellion. Unless he can pursue the great quest, his life is not worth while, and unless he can see more significance to life, immortality would not be alluring. In "Eliot Carson" the two principal characters discuss the matter:

[1] Unpublished papers (B1–1–7).

"I think I should decidedly want to be excused from waking up and finding myself the same old Edna Damon every morning for an eternity. I sometimes find it rather a depressing sensation already."

"It is a depression which only the excessively self-conceited are proof against, and I think that even they would get enough of themselves by the end of the first thousand years. A good many cannot endure it even for this lifetime. A distinctly recognized class of suicides are of those who make away with themselves not for any poignant cause, but from sheer self-weariness. . . . Picture the disgust and impotent wrath of these poor creatures on being aroused at the resurrection by some smiling angel and informed that they were immortal and in a land where suicide is impossible." [2]

In a book review in the *Springfield Union* we find the same idea:

. . . the author . . . speaks as if immortality were under any circumstances so intrinsically desirable that men have a motive to strain a point to hope for it. Such is scarcely the case. Suppose immortal life to be a matter of choice, no intelligent person, we imagine, would accept it unless under some guarantee that it should be happy, and a good many would even stipulate that it should be happier than the average lot on earth. Without some such stipulation mortality is a privilege not lightly to be surrendered.[3]

Given understanding of the spirit of young Bellamy, we can realize that the stark, unreserved appraisals he makes of formal religion as he knew it did not grow out of any casual or carping temper, but from a determination to face the issues regardless of the outcome. His own sense of integrity was his control. He would not deceive himself.

In another fragment we find his mind turning over the meaning of occurrences which must have been familiar to Socrates as he walked along the shore of the Aegean:

At the seashore at low tide the other day I saw sea spiders fighting over snails, and then one who had captured a snail put his mouth in and sucked his body out. Generally the snail did not even have the full satisfaction of being wholly sucked at by the same spider, for another and yet another would generally attack and displace the first spider and con-

[2] *Ibid.* (B1–3–27).
[3] "Literary Notices," *Springfield Daily Union,* June 24, 1876.

tinue his meal. Now a Red Indian accustomed to torture his captives to death, and ready to be tortured in turn, would see in this illustration of the cruelty of the universe no obstacle to a cheerful philosophy. It really looks as if we had become civilized and softened beyond the intent of nature and beyond the standard of the universe. We have invented virtues and refinements which are beyond or at variance with the morals of the Creator and the general tenor of our universe. Our humanities on which we so pride ourselves are in short not universalities.[4]

Scattered through his notes are many such comments, all tending to show that he did not shun the great issues. Those Marxians who took the attitude of dismissing him as a commonplace, middle-class religionist could not have been aware of the course of his mind. As another illustration of the relentlessness of his thinking we have this fragment from a notebook:

Consider how difficult it must be for cat theologians to account for the motives of a Deity in permitting the existence of dogs, small boys, and puddles of water, or of mosquito theologians in accounting for dry summers. The plight of your ancient astronomers who puzzled their poor heads in the hopeless effort to account for the position and motion of the starry heavens on the theory that the earth was their center and the object of their existence and creation, was not more hopeless than that of the theologians who try to account for the existence of suffering and other drawbacks to human comfort while holding to the theory of an omnipotent Deity with whom the interests of humanity are the central motive in his arrangements of the universe.[5]

In his notebooks and manuscripts and in the columns of the *Springfield Union* Bellamy's questions relate not only to the great questions which have faced men of all ages; they get down to specific characteristics of organized religion which he cannot accept. He was under no illusions as to the habit of conventional religion of maintaining appearances without the vital spirit. In a notebook filled with plots for stories is the following: "Describe how jeering Mephistopheles took him around behind the scenes and showed him out of what shams and grotesque devices the imposing and beautiful front effects are produced." [6] To illustrate how far apart theory and practice are in conventional religion he outlines a story, the theme of which is a suit to break a woman's will on the ground that she must have been

[4] Unpublished papers (B2–5–2, 3).
[5] *Ibid.* (B1–3–125).
[6] *Ibid.* (B2–Plots 1–25).

insane because she actually lived by Christian teaching. In a review of Browning's poem, "The Inn Album," we find his comment: "Here . . . is one of the most powerful arraignments of the old Calvinistic idea of future retribution that was ever written:

> 'But Hell he made explicit. After death,
> Life; man created new, ingeniously
> Perfect for a vindictive purpose . . .'" [7]

The praise and flattery of the deity which Christianity took over from the habit of grovelling praise of tyrants he finds intolerable: "Think you that the popular approbation which even a truly great man despises is grateful incense to deity? He is supposed to seek to 'make to himself a great name.'" [8] In another place he wrote: "Ordinary religion is different in degree (not, as it should be, in kind) from loyalty to earthy sovereigns." [9] Again he wrote: "I can't get any comfort out of contemplating other people's misery. I never believed Dr. [Jonathan?] Edwards' theory that contemplating the misery of the folks in hell could be relied on as a means of restoring hilarity among the saved, when they had a touch of the blues." [10]

The modern world has moved so far from doctrines of original sin and hell that much of the point is lost from his comment concerning the orthodox: "These very people can often be convicted of having had children. Yet according to their own notion they have committed a crime inexpressibly worse than murder. For on that theory murder is but a mere casualty to a soul, a trifling incident, not to be mentioned in comparison with the eternal consequences that attend the awful tragedy of birth. . . . I do not believe in your ghastly theory of a divine scheme of immortal agony." [11]

As the conventional church began to revolt from hell fire it tended to fall into an emotional sentimentalism. Bellamy's revulsion from this trait is expressed in an editorial on "Religious Sensuousness" in the *Springfield Union* in August, 1877:

> Sensitive to moral claims as is the true religious sentiment, what passes for religion often takes a grossly sensuous if not sensual habit. . . . Religious feeling and impulse find much of their life and power in our strongest and warmest affections, without the deep engrossment of which religion is but a very dry and ineffective affair. It is easy to see, therefore,

[7] "Literary Notices," *Springfield Daily Union,* January 8, 1876.
[8] Unpublished papers (B2–4–8).
[9] *Ibid.* (B2–4–8).
[10] *Ibid.* (B2–E.C.–16).
[11] *Ibid.* (B1–3–130).

how false a fire can be kindled up out of passions, anything but devout, which shall burn intensely, and as impurely as did the old pagan altars. . . . Nothing is more common and disgusting than the licentiousness of sham piety.

What we have directly in view is the too great drift of much of our really sincere and essentially pure Christianity, toward a gushing style of expression which is as remote from the New Testament type as it is from good taste. It is love, fermented into love-sickness. It is Solomon's song taken sentimentally if not actually. . . . It is a luscious beverage of spiritual sensuousness which weak heads and hearts cannot bear innocuously. . . .[12]

In 1882 Rufus Bellamy resigned from his pastorate under pressure from the congregation. This action seems to have given Edward the occasion he had waited for to give up his church membership without injuring the feelings of his parents.

A man's religion can be judged best not by what he says but by what he does. Those who knew Edward Bellamy are at one in their testimony that he lived as he taught. The young women who worked in his home—he would not call them servants—were treated as entire equals, their only such experience in a lifetime. He shared whatever he had, his money, his precious solitude, his limited and waning strength, his very life. His wife relates that he gave away his clothes to those in need until he had barely enough to wear (he wrote that "clothes moths are a judgment on those who hoard clothes"); he was courteous to everyone, high or low. He had certain personal weaknesses, but they were not in any limitation of the practice of brotherhood.

In a stray notebook, apparently between *Looking Backward* and *Equality,* he wrote: "God holds his head low, and is the saddest being in the universe. The most perfect being in the universe must be the saddest so long as there is any sadness in it. Schopenhauer said, 'Pity God and so end it.' We do pity God, and so improve it. This Christ tried to teach, but they did not understand." [13] That his mind played over this question in different moods is evident from another entry of a very different temper:

It may be that God is not complete, that He is working toward some purpose, but if so, it is a purpose which no finite being can even most dimly apprehend; concerning which we must know absolutely nothing.

[12] "Religious Sensuousness," *Springfield Daily Union,* August 22, 1877.
[13] Unpublished papers (B2–Plots 2–6).

To speak of our working with Him toward a common purpose, save so far as we must as His creatures involuntarily do so, is unspeakably the lunacy of our conceit. We may believe in Him and rejoice in His existence, and let our hearts flow forth to Him and find our only joy in the necessary basis of all the joy we can take in our belief in Him. But to talk of being admitted to His councils, of knowing aught of His purposes, none but persons of inadequate intellect can do that.

Then the mood changes again and we read:

The dawn is in the sky unmistakably, but as yet very indistinctly. Shall we sanction tryst? A star can be seen only faintly and at intervals when the sky is very clear and the eye is vigorous. Shall we then, impatient with straining our gaze and after all finding that we cannot make it out more than indistinct, declare that it is not there at all? That would be the idiocy of the Positivists, who deny God because they cannot understand Him better. Rather let the wise rejoice with joy unspeakable that they can see God at all. Considering the limitations of our intelligence, that is already a wonderful thing.[14]

The religion of his later life is pictured by his son Paul:

Father ever showed that he was an intensely religious man. He had not attended church himself for years, nor would he permit his children to go either to church or Sunday School. With regard to his ideas of the Deity, I should say that he was in all respects a Unitarian. He believed firmly in the existence of God and was always conscious of his presence. He believed Jesus Christ the man who had enunciated the most perfect code of human conduct ever promulgated. He believed in a very common-sense attitude toward God, if I may employ such a term. He taught us when we repeated the Lord's Prayer every night to use the short form as it appears in St. Luke's gospel. He declared there was no sense in telling the Lord, "For thine is the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen"; because, remarked he, that was a fact the Lord was quite well aware of.

When I reached about 10 years of age, I should say, father undertook reading aloud to my sister and me out of the Scriptures, this usually on Sunday. He commented as he read, and always emphasized the social and humanistic side of the teachings of Jesus. He used to tell us that he was quite sure that the all-important thing was how we treated our

[14] *Ibid.* (B2–Plots 1–3, 6, 7).

fellow men. He used to read out of the Old Testament, too, and seemed to love the rolling cadences of the Psalms and Isaiah. He said that the reason he did not want us to go to church was because he thought the church failed to put the emphasis on religion where it belonged, namely on the translation of the Golden Rule into human relations; that it sang constantly about the glories of Heaven and did not denounce or attempt to correct evil and wickedness here below.

Paul Bellamy's comments on his father's attitude toward Unitarianism are supported by his father's editorials and book reviews in the *Springfield Union*. He spoke of it as "the most interesting religious movement in recent American history." [15] In a review of a *Life of Samuel J. May* he wrote:

> A large part of the active life of Mr. May was spent as a minister of country parishes, at a time, too, when Unitarianism was held to be considerably worse than infidelity, if anything. That he should, under such circumstances, have made himself a power in the land, shows that he was a man of no ordinary intellectual ability, while even his orthodox neighbors were forced to admit that he was a good man. He was, indeed, a singularly sweet and perfect character, and we trust his "Life" will have a wide reading.[16]

Edward Bellamy's undisguised, critical appraisal of the actual influence of the church and the clergy on society was no temporary outburst of his youth, to be followed by a return to the fold in his mature years. His rebellion from the servility, selfishness, and cowardice which so frequently characterize conventional religion never waned. In *Looking Backward* we find but few direct references to the failure of the church and the clergy, although the inferences are clear. Conventional religion he looked upon as caught in the meshes of a hostile social system.

> Though a man sought it carefully with tears [he wrote in that book], it was hard to find a way in which he could earn a living and provide for his family except by pressing in before some weaker rival and taking the food from his mouth. Even the ministers of religion were not exempt from this cruel necessity. While they warned their flocks against the love of money, regard for their families compelled them to keep an outlook for the pecuniary prizes of their calling. Poor fellows, theirs was

[15] "Literary Notices," *Springfield Daily Union*, March 13, 1875.
[16] *Ibid.* April 15, 1873.

indeed a trying business, preaching to men a generosity and unselfishness which they and everybody knew would, in the existing state of the world, reduce to poverty those who should practice them, laying down laws of conduct which the law of self-preservation compelled men to break. Looking on the inhuman spectacle of society, these worthy men bitterly bemoaned the depravity of human nature; as if angelic nature would not have been debauched in such a devil's school. Ah, my friends, believe me, it is not now in this happy age that humanity is proving the divinity within it. It was rather in those evil days when not even the fight for life with one another, the struggle for mere existence, in which mercy was folly, could wholly banish generosity and kindness from the earth.[17]

Bellamy may have hoped that, given a clear picture of conditions and possibilities such as he presented in *Looking Backward,* in the presence of the great social injustices all about them the ministers would rise up and make themselves a part of a movement for social regeneration. A few of them did so. A Congregational minister in Baltimore put the matter briefly: "The New Testament teaches a theory of human nature and of society which is in accord with Nationalism [Bellamy's social movement], namely, that Christian society is an organism, and that we are all members, one of another. The existing industrial system assumes the opposite is true, that each man lives by and for himself, and we are all rivals one of another." [18]

However, the majority of the clergy seemed to turn against him and his vision. In 1893 *New Nation* reported that the Knights of Labor of Minnesota, meeting at St. Paul, "Resolved, that this assembly ask the clergymen of Minnesota, 'Why, in case of disagreement between labor and capital, with but few exceptions and those few exceptions generally the pastors of liberal churches, they array themselves on the side of capital?'" [19] The *New Nation* quotes the minister of a wealthy Providence church as saying in a sermon, "'. . . there are certain advantages [in poverty] which are of the nature of blessed compensations. There is the freedom from the onerous cares and responsibilities of the rich. Narrow circumstances are calculated to lead the soul to a more real trust and dependence in God.'" [20] In 1895, after *Looking Backward* and before *Equality,* Bellamy wrote a paper, "Christmas in the Year 2000," in which he said:

[17] *Looking Backward,* pp. 277–78.
[18] "Christianity and Nationalism," *The New Nation,* II, No. 22 (May 28, 1892), 341.
[19] "Christian and Labor," *The New Nation,* III, No. 7 (February 18, 1893), 97.
[20] "Religion As It Is Taught," *The New Nation,* III, No. 16 (April 22, 1893), 208.

Only by peace could human nature perfect itself, taught Christ, but these others said, only by strife. And by this law of strife, they meant not the friendly competition for honorable distinctions that we know, but a struggle for existence itself, an Ishmaelitish lifelong wrangle between each and all, not only for everything that made life dignified or desirable but for bare life itself.

For the credit of the human heart and reason there were some in every generation in those nineteen centuries of so-called Christianity who declared against the law of strife as the devil's law, as wicked as it was senseless, and who were not weary with appealing to Christ's law of peace and mutual helpfulness as the only sane rule by which men could live together. But while it would not quite do, so long as Christianity was universally accepted, to denounce Christ Himself for uttering the Golden Rule, these who echoed His teachings, though in terms that did but paraphrase His words, were hounded down as disturbers of the peace, and as such imprisoned, killed and persecuted, and ridiculed as fools and visionaries. . . .

The family fireside was in that bitter age the only spot on earth in which the law of strife was not dominant, though even there its malign influence was sadly felt. It remained, however, the circle in which more nearly than anywhere else the Golden Rule was recognized. . . .

Jesus Christ did not come to teach any new or special doctrine as to the family relation, nor yet to lay fresh emphasis on the old one. . . . Always Christ was seeking to call men out of the narrow paradise of selfish loves and interests, and make them realize the larger ties and greater duties that were theirs as sons, not of men, but of man, as brothers, not of this man or that man, but of all men. What perversion of the meaning of Christmas could then be more curiously complete, however pleasing in itself, than the consecration of this day of all days in the year to a family feast with curtains drawn against the world without?

There hangs upon my study wall a picture—a copy of an old print of the nineteenth century—representing just such a family feast on Christmas Day, save that the curtains not being closely drawn permit to be seen two beggar children, with gaunt and pallid faces marked with tears, standing without, covered with the falling snow as they peer in with longing, hungry eyes at the festival. It is a picture that tells the whole story and typifies the age.[21]

[21] "Christmas in the Year 2000," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, XII, No. 2 (January, 1895), 6.

In a letter in the first issue of *The Dawn,* a Christian Socialist periodical, he commented: "It is high time certainly that those especially interested in the Christian Church should try in earnest to wake it up to the imminence of great social changes. The question for the Church is simply whether it shall lead or be dragged at the tail of the movement for social reorganization." [22]

In his last book, *Equality,* it is evident that he no longer expected conventional religion to change its attitude. A number of quotations will effectively dispose of the charge so frequently made against him that he surrendered to or compromised with the church. In the often quoted parable of the water tank we read:

> From the preaching of the clergy . . . you would have thought the corner stone of Christianity was the right of property.[23]
>
> . . . when the capitalists saw that the people still murmured and would not give ear to the soothsayers, and because also they feared lest they should come upon the tank and take of the water by force, they brought forth to them certain holy men (but they were false priests), who spake unto the people that they should be quiet and trouble not the capitalists because they thirsted. And these holy men, who were false priests, testified to the people that this affliction was sent to them of God for the healing of their souls, and that if they should bear it in patience and lust not after the water, neither trouble the capitalists, it would come to pass that after they had given up the ghost they would come to a country where there should be no capitalists but an abundance of water. Howbeit, there were certain true prophets of God also, and these had compassion on the people and would not prophesy for the capitalists, but rather spake constantly against them.[24]

Similar expressions occur elsewhere in the book:

> "Impossible; it is against human nature!" was the cry which met and for the most part overbore and silenced every prophet or teacher who sought to rouse the world to discontent with the reign of chaos and awaken faith in the possibility of a kingdom of God on earth.
>
> . . . this base view of human nature was the greatest infidelity to God and man which the human race ever fell into, but, alas! it was not the

[22] *The Dawn,* I, No. 1 (May 15, 1889), 5.
[23] Bellamy, Edward, *Equality* (New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), p. 114.
[24] *Ibid.,* p. 199.

infidelity which the churches condemned, but rather a sort which their teachings of man's hopeless depravity were calculated to implant and confirm.[25]

> What language shall we find then that is strong enough fitly to characterize the attitude of these so-called ministers of Christ, who in his name rebuked and derided the aspirations of a world weary of social wrong and seeking for a better way? [26]
>
> . . . fifty thousand clergymen preached every Sunday as many sermons to as many congregations. Four fifths of these sermons were poor, half of the rest perhaps fair, some of the others good, and a few score, possibly, out of the whole really of a fine class.[27]
>
> The priests deafened their flocks with appeals to love God, to give their hearts to him. They should have rather taught them, as Christ did, to love their fellowmen and give their hearts to them. Hearts so given the love of God would presently enkindle.[28]
>
> When women were called the religious sex it would have been indeed a high ascription if it had been meant that they were the more spiritually minded. . . . Less educated, as a rule, than men, unaccustomed to responsibility, and trained in habits of subordination and self-distrust, they leaned in all things upon precedent and authority. Naturally, therefore, they still held to the principle of authoritative teaching in religion long after men had generally rejected it. All that was changed with the Revolution, and indeed began to change long before it.[29]
>
> . . . the masses of the nation reached the conviction that the revolution against which the clergy had warned them as unchristian was, in fact, the most essentially and intensely Christian movement that had ever appealed to men since Christ called his disciples, and as such imperatively commanded the strongest support of every believer or admirer of Christ's doctrine.[30]

Mr. West, the principal character, inquiring about the new world into which he had awakened, asked his host:

> How long is it since people ceased to call themselves Catholics, Protestants, Baptists, Methodists, and so on?

The answer is representative of Bellamy's expectation of the new day:

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 386.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 256.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 268.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

That kind of classification may be said to have received a fatal shock at the time of the great Revolution, when sectarian demarcations and doctrinal differences, already fallen into a good deal of disregard, were completely swept away and forgotten in the passionate impulse of brotherly love which brought men together for the founding of a nobler social order. The old habit might possibly have revived in time had it not been for the new culture, which, during the first generation subsequent to the Revolution, destroyed the soil of ignorance and superstition which had supported ecclesiastical influence, and made its recrudescence impossible for evermore.[31]

The would-be religious teacher had to attach himself, therefore, to some one or other of the sectarian organizations, whose mouthpiece he must consent to be, as the condition of obtaining any hearing at all. The organization might be hierarchical, in which case he took his instructions from above, or it might be congregational, in which case he took his orders from below. The one method was monarchical, the other democratic, but one as inconsistent as the other with the office of the religious teacher, the first condition of which, as we look at it, should be absolute spontaneity of feeling and liberty of utterance.

It may be said that the old ecclesiastical system depended on a double bondage: first, the intellectual subjection of the masses through ignorance to their spiritual directors; and, secondly, the bondage of the directors themselves to the sectarian organizations, which as spiritual capitalists monopolized the opportunities of teaching. As the bondage was twofold, so also was the enfranchisement—a deliverance alike of the people and of their teachers, who under the guise of leaders, had been themselves but puppets. . . . In a word, the modern religious teacher is a prophet, not a priest. The sanction of his words lies not in any human ordination or ecclesiastical *exequatur,* but, even as it was with the prophets of old, in such response as his words may have power to evoke from human hearts.[32]

The decay of priestly authority left every soul face to face with that mystery, with the responsibility of its interpretation upon himself. The collapse of the traditional theologies relieved the whole subject of man's relation with the infinite from the oppressive effect of the false finalities of dogma.[33]

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 259–60.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 260–61.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

In view of such passages as these in his books and editorials it is clear that he showed no deference. But at this point Bellamy's mind began to diverge from that of many old-time socialists and of present-day communists. Their impulse to destroy the evil in religion was undiscriminating; they would destroy the whole. Bellamy was controlled, not by a passion to destroy, even for the sake of rebuilding, but by a desire to make life full and whole. He had nurtured a wide range of interests, and in no field did he willingly throw away the values he had found. And so we see him building for himself a religion which would express his life, and helping to enlarge the social life of which he felt himself to be an organic part. A notebook entry indicates that it was in no cowering spirit he undertook the task:

> Are we men then the only gods that are the nearest godlike of all beings in the universe, is a question one can but ask as he contrasts the brutal cruelty inherent in the nature of things, with the efforts of martyrs and heroes to ameliorate this cruelty by self-devotion and self-sacrifice. Jesus Christ regarded as a god it is impossible to adore with any intelligent idea, because there is no answer to the question if God be good.
>
> Why this hideous atrocity of life? But if Jesus Christ be regarded as a man seeking to wipe away tears and to succor those in need, it is impossible not to admire him; and no lover of his kind need resent being called by his name.[34]

Over and over in his notebooks we find him feeling his way, step by step, into a religion which he can respect, and which would give meaning to his life:

> There is something intrinsically great in generosity and self-sacrifice, because the spring of these acts is superiority to self, the sense of one's real identity with the universal and infinite being, an identity conceiving which one perceives his self, his individuality, to be a very cheap affair, to be thrown overboard on small provocation. The other virtues such as chastity, such as refraining from murder, and even the virtue of honesty, are useful, but not great. They are mere social conventionalities. They have no basis in the absolute, as have the vestments of self-sacrifice and generosity. Hence springs the greater admiration that the unsophisticated heart of man has always shown for virtues of the latter rather than the former sort. The said latter are in effect natural virtues, the other artificial.

[34] Unpublished papers (B1–B–4).

> Men have always been found who could laugh at chastity and ridicule honesty, but no man ever yet lived who could laugh at self-sacrifice or refuse his respect to generosity, or to that courage that holds one's own life cheap, for the courage that risks life is also one of the natural virtues.[35]

In a draft for a story we find the comment: "Friend asks what he means by believing in God. He uses comparison of cuneiform characters, which a fool pronounces hen tracks, but a savant believes to have a meaning, though he may find it impossible to unravel it."[36]

To what philosophy of being did Bellamy's rebellion in religion lead him? The chapter on "The Religion of Solidarity" partly answers that question. However, no single statement of his is adequate. As an illustration of how his mind returned to the subject, an undated statement made, it seems, in his early twenties, is illuminating. Unconventional as is this account, it shows unusual independence and daring in his thinking, and indicates the extent to which his mind was free from inherited doctrines. Since this and other discussions are from his private notebooks which he never disclosed, even to members of his family, they should be taken as evidence of how he strove with the problem, and not as mature acknowledged statements of his philosophy:

> The other day [a friend asked me] for a statement of my religious belief. I had never formulated it even in thought. Although to me it had been these many years since first its truths dawned upon me as the principal thing in my life, the sole salt or savor of existence, it has been to me rather a mode of feeling about myself and things in general, an attitude toward the universe, than any set of doctrinal tenets. . . .
>
> We had at first some difficulty in understanding each other as to what religion meant. It transpired that he understood thoroughly one's idea concerning the God or Gods who by his supposition had created or who ruled the earth or the universe. Without a belief in a God or Gods, he did not see how there could be any religion. I explained to him that I was not a disbeliever in the gods any more than a believer, but that if I were a total disbeliever, it would not affect my religion. Religion, as I conceived it, was a man's ideas of his relations to the infinite around him in which as a bubble on the ocean, a swift star in the unparalleled endless city of the skies, he, like they, momentarily existed. If this infinity around him includes a God, the knowledge of that God is important to him, like

[35] *Ibid.* (B1–3–111, 112).

[36] *Ibid.* (B2–Plots 1–25).

any other details of that infinity; but unless this God be but another name for the universe, be, in fact, the same thing as the puzzle of infinity, no knowledge of that God, however sweet and joyous, can help to an idea of his relations to the infinite; which is religion. It is but a tender tie, like in kind though different in degree to the ties of love and dependence which we feel toward earthly relatives and potentates.

No theory of a God ever advanced a human being one step toward a clear idea of the relation between the finite and the infinite, ever offered one hint toward the solution of the mysterious point of junction between the individual and the universal, the personal and the impersonal. A belief in the immortality of the individual and ever so clear notions of the vicissitudes in store for that individual after death, however interesting in themselves, has nothing whatever to do with religion, does not advance one a step toward any definite religious ideas, if we define religion, as I do, as being the question of man's relations with the infinite. However noble an ideal of a God we may form, as that ideal must needs be of a personal and individual being essentially finite (since thus conceived), an idea of him is not an idea of the infinite, but merely of the relations of our insignificant person to another very great person. I explained to my friend that all the religious systems and theologies ever invented might be fully understood and accepted without once exercising the mind in the thought relating to the question of the relation of man to the infinite.

When he asked if I was not applying the word "religion" to what should be designated as "philosophy" and was usually so designated, I said that possibly I was, but I thought the perversion of the term from its vulgar use was in the interest of its nobler meaning. It was a pity if the African fetish worshipper was conceded to have a religion and the sage could find no more honored name than a philosophy for his dreams of the infinite. Finally we agreed to waive the question of etymology, and I gave my friend as follows an approximate idea in doctrinal form of my belief of the relations of man to the infinite. The effect to me was very much as if I should have undertaken to give a clear conception of the charms of Cleopatra by the exhibition of her skeleton.

Every man consists of two parts or two sides: the one being his individuality, his personality, that is, his mind, body, appetite and peculiarities, with all which constitute him a man and which distinguishes him from other men. This side of him is transient and unimportant, lasting

a few years and then perishing forever. The other side of him is something that seems eternal and infinite, which seems to be all that is left of the universe when the individual side of his own self is eliminated. This side of man we may call God, the universe, infinity or what else seems to imply to our minds the idea of the Absolute and the All. This part or side of man is his true and only important self, the only aspect of his life to be taken at all seriously. The mind of man becomes conscious of this infinite side of his being by actual experience of states of feeling in which he rises into the realm of infinity and impersonality and perceives the comparative infinitesimality of the individual state of his being and of all personal conceptions.

The only important end of life to those once aware of this infinite side of their being is ever more and more to enjoy and enter into it, and by borrowing its standards to learn to regard with serene indifference the vicissitudes of this individual life.

This I explained was the best I could do on the spur of the moment in the way of a succinct statement of my religious belief. My friend insisted on writing it down on paper, and after apparently reading it over several times to himself said that he wanted to ask me a few questions.

I was glad to be questioned for I knew that if his questions were sharp they would bring out new knowledge for me. He said, "This claim of an infinite part as one side of every man's self, his real self, really means of course that all men have one and the same soul, the same central being, namely, the universe, their personalities radiating from it like spokes from a carriage hub. Now, is this infinite, common soul personal or impersonal? Is it a gigantic, divine individual or is it an unconscious impersonal All?"

By way of reply I said, "That question I cannot answer. You asked me to state my religion. I did so. If I did not go farther in defining it, it was because I saw my way no farther. What I stated was what I knew, was matter of absolute conviction. If you ask me to go farther and theorize, I shall do it with pleasure, but you will understand that it is mere guesswork.

"Well, this I believe—that the infinite being which constitutes the only true life and self of us all (though not one in a thousand ever is conscious of his true self at all) is at once a conscious and an impersonal being. I fully appreciate the force of the objection brought against the conception of a divine being on a personal scale, but I believe that the loftier experi-

ences of our human nature afford suggestions for the conceptions of a mode of being which, without lapsing into the unconscious, may yet be impersonal in the highest degree. Such I believe to be the mode of that infinite and eternal being which constitutes the real and only true self of each one of us."

My friend asked, "Is, then, this conscious yet impersonal being whom you claim as the real essence of every man the one God and Sovereign of the Universe?"

I answered, "I can only guess at that. To my apprehension this, my true self, has the aspect of infinity and seems to be the All. But let us suppose that there is a hierarchy of beings above ourselves. We are not so tall that we should deem ourselves next the roof. Compare the small gaps that separate the stages of being below us with the enormous leap it would be from manhood to Godhood. Yet we may readily believe that there are as many grades above us as below us. That we cannot see them matters nothing. What ideas have the grasshoppers of us? This being, that is the true self of us all, and apparently the common self of us all, is on a scale of infinity as compared with us, but we may readily believe that he is but a stepping stone toward the All." [37]

To select fragments from the mass of Edward Bellamy's writings, in many cases from private personal memoranda which are without order or dates, and to present them as representative of his religious thinking, may seem to be a questionable procedure. Yet there appears no other way to a fair impression.

The inquiry is pertinent because Bellamy's Marxian opponents have fastened on him the reputation of having stupidly or supinely held to a conventional religious pattern, and they have therefore dismissed him as not worth serious consideration. Both his friends and his enemies who are informed are agreed that Bellamy more than any other single person gave direction for two generations to the liberal political thinking of America, and for several decades prevented Marxism, with its doctrines of the class conflict and the dictatorship of the proletariat, from getting a firm foothold in America.

The disclosure of daring, independent, creative thinking in the field of religion puts him in a new light. His loyalty to what are called Christian ethical principles did not represent credulous acquiescence in the ways of

[37] Unpublished papers (B2–5–3–7).

the fathers. Rather it was the outcome of deliberate effort to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." Uncritical acceptance of ideas is credulity, whether those ideas be old or new. The undiscriminating rejection by the Marxian cult of anything in ethics or philosophy which had been associated with religion had in it much more of the character of credulity.

All in all, Edward Bellamy emerges as a man who sought to give unity and consistency to his life, both in thought and action, and in doing so achieved unusual points of observation and was creatively suggestive. An almost inevitable result of such pioneering is vulnerableness. Whoever in exploring what to him is new ground takes his own course rather than following beaten paths is sure to waste some steps. Especially where our chief record of his thinking is made up of bits of writing never intended for publication, our appraisal should not rest on whether or not the ideas expressed are faultless, but on whether he has challenged our customary thinking, taken us to new viewpoints, and suggested new leads for us to follow.

Date Due

~~FACULTY~~			

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

B945 .B44M8
The philosophy of Edward Bellamy,
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00031 1854